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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Paula Blunck for the Master of Science in Speech Communication were presented May 11, 1994, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Paula Blunck for the Master of Science in Speech Communication presented May 11, 1994.

Title: Perceived Communication During Organizational Change.

Organizational change often involves the creation of work teams. This research examines how the creation of self-managed work teams within a particular organization affects perceived communication. Previous research suggests that self-managed teams would socially construct a different view of the organization especially as it relates to power than would those in traditional organizational departments.

Attitudes about communication and power within the organization are analyzed in nine self-managed teams and five traditional departments. This analysis is conducted through both qualitative and quantitative means. Group comments and discussions are used in a qualitative analysis. Multidimensional scaling is used to reveal underlying attitudinal differences the self-managed teams and traditional departments may have about others within the

organization. Two different scales are used to measure perceived attitudes about relationships to management and others within the organization. The first scale is modified from a family communication patterns instrument and is used to measure the analogous equivalent of the supervisor/subordinate (parent/child) relationship within the organizational family. The second scale explores the perceptions of cooperativeness, competitiveness, and independence between groups. Finally, a value ranking is used to measure perceptual differences the groups have about the organization's view of the customer.

The results of this research suggest some differences exist between the two groups regarding perceptions of power and management. Differences about perceptions related to boundaries suggests self-managed teams will construct a different reality as a function of their group. Results regarding perceptions of others and perceptions of the organization's view of customers were mixed. It cannot be strongly concluded that these differences exist as a function of the self-managing teams or because of the types of jobs members in self-managing teams hold.

Due to a number of constraints researching in this particular organization, further examination and validation of findings were not possible. Most of the teams, for example, had been together for only two months.

A possibility for future research may include some longitudinal studies.

PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION DURING
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

by

PAULA BLUNCK

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
SPEECH COMMUNICATION

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1994

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH CONTEXT

A company I know of began a process of organizational restructuring. This process has included the development of self-managed work teams. With a healthy dose of enthusiasm and "full support" from upper management, two pilot teams were initially formed. Several other teams are currently in the process of developing. Today the company is wondering how effective self-managed teams really are.

I was given permission to conduct a research project at this company, examining how the creation of self-managed teams affects organizational communication. This research focuses on how perceptions about the organization and power might differ when comparing the teams to a "traditional group" the Claims department, within the organization.

BACKGROUND

Plagued by an ineffective organizational system and serious financial problems, XYZ Corporation recognized a need for change in how they operated. Three years ago they

began to consider an organizational redesign.

Organizational consultants were hired to help give the company a new direction. Full-time task forces were created to help make redesign recommendations.

An analysis of the organization, using a systems perspective and a needs assessment was conducted by the task force. (I am a former employee of this company and was a member of this task force.) Systems theory, as presented by the organizational consultants, was discussed in terms of inputs and outputs and interaction with the environment (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The organizational "system" was analyzed from primarily a mechanistic view which focused on clearly established lines of control and communication, and a high level of task specialization (Euske & Karlene, 1987; Weick, 1987). Those in the corporation who were committed to change recognized that survival depended on a more responsive and flexible organization.

Literature on organizational change was read and discussed by task members. Members of another task force visited different organizations which had gone from a traditional, linear, mechanistic organizational model to a more nonlinear, "sociotechnical" design. Unlike a system in which people were expected to "perform highly specialized, fractionated tasks" (Cherns, 1976, p. 787), the sociotechnical system could provide a more flexible and

responsive structure. Key features of the system include interdependence within the organization and the formation of work groups from different functions within the organization (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Pasmore, 1982; Taylor, 1975).

These work groups are ideally "intact social systems whose members have the authority to handle internal processes as they see fit" (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, pp. 164-165).

The provisional design proposed was similar in concept to the sociotechnical system. The provisional design included the creation of self-managed, interdisciplinary teams. The creation of these teams implied a new distribution of power.

To help promote a climate of change (and what was talked about as a "paradigm shift" by some), consultants recommended a new language for management. Managers, for example would become "coaches" and "facilitators" rather than bosses, and team members would become "empowered."

Even before two pilot teams were officially formed, the group of field people developed a team relationship. The team consisted of: a consultant, a senior consultant, an analyst, a senior analyst, a specialist, a senior auditor, a credit specialist, a marketing representative, and a senior marketing representative. This team had participated in the work-redesign task force and was eager to embrace a new way of doing business.

They were quite enthusiastic about what they were able to accomplish as a team and had apparent support from the branch manager. They were even given the authority to hire new members for the team.

This particular team later became one of the pilot teams for the company. The team continued to make business decisions that they believed were in the best interests of all concerned. Much to their surprise, they were informed by upper management that some of their decisions were not in line with the corporate "key results areas." Because the team had acted on the mandate to become self-managing, they felt confused and frustrated when upper management imposed what the team thought were conflicting objectives on them. What had happened to "full support" from upper management?

Management, on the other hand, was alarmed to discover that the team had apparently lost sight of some of the corporate objectives and was beginning to act like a renegade group, operating outside the bounds of management design. It may be that some of the expectations management and team participants had regarding organizational change have not been met in the same way they were anticipated. However, a review of relevant literature can make certain predictions regarding how team members will come to understand the organization.

CHAPTER II

THEORY

Two conceptual differences exist between the Claims department at XYZ Corporation and the work teams. The Claims department operates within a hierarchical control structure and has a single focus. The work teams are designed to be self-managing (when it comes to team business), and are interdisciplinary. The literature review for this research has focused on these two organizational changes, and it has included organizational and group theories, and theories of social cognition.

First, the concepts of power and distributed leadership will be addressed. Then the effect of group composition and power as it pertains to communication and understanding within the organization will be discussed.

POWER AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

While this research is a case study, the question of how power mediates communication during organizational change is important in light of the current trends toward team management, total Quality Management (TQM), and other

restructuring efforts (Dean & Evan, 1994; Hagan, 1994; Senge, 1990). If, through self-managed work teams, employees are able to understand the organization in a different way, how is their new mantle of empowerment and broadened understanding of the organization negotiated within an existing hierarchical power structure? Can this relationship be understood by recognizing the influence of that power structure?

TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF POWER

Organizational power can be defined in a number of different ways. Nonetheless, a generally accepted view of power within organizational systems that has evolved from the classical management principles of Taylor and Weber (Euske & Karlene, 1987) includes: a hierarchical structure of control, loyalty, obedience (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Weick, 1987), and a sense of dependence (Tjosvold, 1986). In a traditional, hierarchical organization, power flows through communication channels of authority and "is exercised in a more competitive, controlling manner" (Frost, 1987, p.540). The lines of power are generally "top-down" and very clear: upper management dictates to mid-management; mid-management prescribes goals and procedures for supervisors; supervisors direct and control workers; and workers conform.

EMPOWERMENT

The concept of empowerment as it relates to work teams within an organization is not as clearly defined in the literature. On one hand, it is used as a term which implies a sense of intrinsic motivation and energy within work teams (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). On the other hand, it also implies a sharing of power and authority (Hackman, 1980; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), access to resources, shared values, cooperation, and openness (Pasmore, 1982; Stein & Kanter, 1980; Tjosvold, 1986). I think one of the difficulties in defining empowerment exists because "empowerment" is not clearly understood in practice. When "empowered" groups are developed, power boundaries may not be quite as concrete as they are in a traditional structure (Hackman, 1980; Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992). This is not to say that power no longer exists in a traditional sense within the organization, where others maintain control over resources and set limits. On the contrary, the hierarchical structure may provide benefits to the "empowered" team by making available additional resources to which the team would otherwise not have access (Stein & Kanter, 1980).

Yet if the boundaries within which the teams must operate are not acknowledged or discussed, the group may become frustrated when attempting to exercise authority

(Hackman, 1980; Tjosvold, Andrews, & Struthers, 1991).

Since power is a significant component within organizational life, it makes sense that the rules of power be made clear (Delpit, 1988).

However, before power can be effectively discussed within an organization, it is first necessary to recognize (as I have already suggested) that two different views of power may be in operation. Although power can be generally stated as access to or control of resources, it can also be viewed as either authoritarian and competitive or interdependent and cooperative (Tjosvold, 1989; Tjosvold, Andrews, & Struthers, 1991; Tjosvold & Jones, 1993).

A number of studies have dealt with power relationships in organizations. Research done on goal interdependence suggests that perceptions of shared values, openness and cooperation can have a positive impact on organizational climates. Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, the results of a study which was conducted with 47 different groups in a large company suggested that cooperative managers (those who worked with employees toward common goals) were perceived by employees as effective and positive. The study also supported the idea that effective managers are ones who help "employees feel powerful" and that in an atmosphere of cooperation, "people want others to perform effectively and use their resources to promote common objectives" (Tjosvold,

Andrews & Struthers, 1991, p.296). However, where competition was perceived, goals were viewed as incompatible (Tjosvold, Andrews, & Struthers, 1991). A previous study conducted by Tjosvold (1989), using a similar measure, indicated that "competitive goals were related to suspicious expectations, poor self-exchange, and weakened relationships; while those who developed cooperative goals "expected assistance, exchanged resources, influenced collaboratively, developed positive feelings, and strengthened their work relationship" (pp.54-57). An earlier study on cooperative and competitive relationships revealed similar findings (Tjosvold & Jones, 1983).

An exploratory study on the perceptions of subordinates regarding the political involvement of their supervisors also suggests that activities that were viewed as political (competitive) hinder communication within an organization (Jablin, 1981).

These studies suggest that different perceptions of power within an organization will impact communication effectiveness. If power is perceived as cooperative and open, communication is strengthened. If power is perceived as authoritarian and competitive, communication is weakened. This leads me to believe that if power boundaries are not clear, self-managed teams embedded in traditional

(hierarchical) organizations may have mixed perceptions of power. On one hand, they may experience an increased sense of cooperation and empowerment between functions, but they may also experience uncertainty when it comes to their relationship with management. At the same time, because self-managed teams are "a powerful social invention" (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, p.183) managers may also experience mixed perceptions related to power relationships.

GROUP COMPOSITION

As stated in the introduction, the work teams at XYZ Corporation are composed of members from several different work functions. The formation of these teams carries with it the expectation that members will be able to make more effective (and profitable) decisions based on improved communication and their collective understanding of the organization as a whole (Pasmore, 1982).

Studies on group decision making support the view that a broader range of perspectives increases the likelihood that groups will make informed, sound decisions. Research done in particular by Randy Hirokawa (1988; 1990) points to the necessity of a thorough understanding of presented problems as one of the key criteria for decision making. Hirokawa's work is from a functional perspective which argues that key functions rather than a given order must be

met. Successful decision making, Hirokawa's studies reveal, involves the group's ability to see alternative choices and an accurate ability to analyze the consequences of alternative choices (Hirokawa, 1985; Hirokawa & Scheerhorn, 1986).

Although Hirokawa's work (1985) gives support to the value of multiple perspectives in decision making, it does not explain how decisions are actually negotiated. Nevertheless, Hirokawa does acknowledge that powerful people of authority can have a strong influence on the rest of the group and come to "characterize the group as a whole" (Gouran & Hirokawa, 1986, p.88). This assertion suggests that the value of multiple perspectives is significantly influenced by the degree of authority and control that exists either within the group or by the degree of authority and control over the group.

An interesting study that involved the use of a mechanical form of control in group decision making concluded that less critical thinking and fewer ideas were generated when strict control was imposed. The study was originally designed to support the idea of computer-supported decision making in groups. It was hypothesized that a computer would actually help facilitate communication and decision-making by generating decision-making tools such as brainstorming, problem

definition, etc. The results indicated that the baseline did a better job of critical thinking and analysis (Pool, Holmes, Watson, & DeSanctis, 1993). Even though the computer was an artificial form of authority, it did direct and control the participants involved in the study.

Together, these studies help further the argument that the value of multiple perspectives in decision-making is mediated by the influence of power. However, they do not provide any insight as to how individual members develop a more complex perspective of decision-making within groups. Yet without such development, it stands to reason that a group with widely diverse perspectives would not be able to reach any kind of consensus without the sway of authority. It is therefore important to look beyond group composition and focus on how group members (who may even have diverse backgrounds) are able to develop a shared sense of understanding through communication. "Language does not simply inform ...[it] is an instrument of power as well as an instrument of knowledge and communication" (Mumby, 1988, p. 102).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

It is known that when individuals become members in various groups, shared perspectives tend to develop. These

shared perspectives help frame an individual's understanding of his or her world. It is believed that communication among group members actually facilitates a group viewpoint. When individuals take on a particular group orientation, it can be said that those individuals are members of a particular reference group (Shibutani, 1955).

Reference group theory may help explain how meanings come to be viewed in a similar way; though a more in depth explanation of the role of language as it relates to shared meaning is given through Berger and Luckmann's (1966) concept of socially constructed reality. Berger and Luckmann posit that language is the medium for constructing how we see the world. It is through the continual exchange of meanings via communication that we come to have similar understandings about reality (p. 23). Knowledge and meanings then are cognitively constructed through language (Berger & Luckmann, 1986; McCleod & Chaffee, 1972).

The concept of a socially constructed reality is a significant departure from the often held organizational viewpoint that communication can be "conceptualized . . . as a tangible substance [which flows] upward, downward, and laterally within a container organization" (Smircich & Calas, 1987, p. 231). It is this departure that I believe is particularly important when considering XYZ Corporation's question: How does the creation of self-managed teams

affect organizational communication? A mere analysis of information flow will not reveal perceptual changes that impact the exchange of meanings within the organization. Nor will an analysis of information flow reveal conflicting "alternative symbolic universes" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 100) which some teams may have developed through a social construction of reality.

It is interesting to note that the promoters of organizational change at XYZ Corporation used language as a tool in an effort to help shape a new reality in the company. As mentioned earlier, metaphoric terms like "coach" rather than "boss" were used when discussing change. Metaphors can be very effective in helping to convey concepts (Arbib & Hesse, 1986; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Smith & Eisenberg, 1987). Concerning organizational change, "if metaphors are carefully selected, they can influence employees' thinking, feelings, and their construction of reality in ways that facilitate organizational transformation" (Sackmann, 1989, p. 468). Although these metaphors were used early in discussions about organizational change, I do not believe they are currently being used. I may have some insight (from previous involvement with this organization) as to why managers might not be actively promoting change through the use of

language, but I will not be addressing those issues in this research.

SOCIAL COGNITION AND COMMUNICATION

Social construction of reality gives an explanation for similar understandings or shared orientations between people. Yet it does not address to any significant degree how meaning is interpreted and constructed by the individual. Social cognition, however, examines the cognitive processes involved in the acquisition of understanding and knowledge.

Schemas or scripts are terms given to "cognitive structures that represent organized knowledge about a given concept or type of stimulus" (Fiske, 1984, p. 140) and enable us to make sense of our world (Arbib & Hesse, 1986; Fiske, 1984; Pryor & Ostrom, 1987).

Theorists Arbib and Hesse (1986) explain schemas in terms of "programs" (p. 69) that continually are being modified through the process of interaction and feedback (Arbib & Hesse, 1986; Neisser, 1976). Language is merely "a way of giving us an imperfect representation of schema assemblages each of us has" (Arbib & Hesse, 1986, p.15). Therefore, similar or "compatible" schemas are important for effective communication between individuals (Arbib & Hesse,

1986; Ritchie, 1992). It is believed that our brains "store information in abstract form" (Fiske, 1984, p. 140) which then acts as a pattern or guide for understanding the world.

These abstract patterns may be simplified versions of reality (Fiske, 1984, p. 141). Organized categorically, "a stereotypic content of the schema" (p.160) is most likely developed and stored. People who belong to groups will see others outside their group in a less complex way than they will those inside their group (Fiske, 1984; Pryor & Ostrom, 1987); thus, "the out-group polarization effect appears to be caused by a lack of complexity in the schema for the out-group" (Fiske, 1984, p. 165). This is a particularly important point to consider in light of XYZ Corporation's development of interdisciplinary teams. Schema theory would suggest that those participating in the interdisciplinary teams would begin to develop a much richer or more complex understanding of others representing different functions such as the Claims Department. Schema theory may also suggest the development of a shared customer view.

A limited number of studies have been done within an organizational context based on schema theory. Those studies support the view that scripts, which provide basis for organizational behavior and understanding, are developed and shared through interaction (Gioia, Donnellon, & Sims, 1989; Gioia & Sims, 1986; Poole, Gray, & Gioia, 1990).

A proposed theory of schema management (Ritchie, 1992) which focuses on family communication patterns may also prove particularly useful in examining communication within XYZ Corporation. Because of the complex nature of the organizational system, the family analogy may be particularly useful in conceptualizing and making sense of communication patterns between the manager/subordinate (parent/child) relationship within this company.

THE ORGANIZATION AS "FAMILY"

Families are social systems as are corporate organizations. Families can also be viewed as small groups within the context of a larger social system or environment. The self-managed teams and the Claims Department at XYZ Corporation are, too, small groups within the context of a larger system. This particular theory suggests that the development of similar schemas facilitates more effective communication and that family members will develop similar schemas with regard to family topics. The theory also suggests that communication patterns within the family (or group) will have a direct impact on how "information is introduced into and exchanged within the family" (Ritchie, 1992, p.3). Ritchie goes on to define these communication patterns in terms of "conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation" (p.11). This definition appears

to be somewhat similar to Tjosvold and Jones (1983) explanation of power dynamics within an organizational context. Tjosvold and Jones referred to the authority or "conformity-orientation" as "competitive" and the "conversation-orientation" as cooperative. Tjosvold's research (as was discussed earlier) supported the assertion that how power is perceived does have an impact on communication effectiveness.

The perspective Ritchie's theory suggests regarding the impact of family (group) communication patterns when members encounter groups with opposing communication patterns seems especially relevant to the self-managed teams at XYZ Corporation. Ritchie proposes that conflicting patterns could create "a frustrating double-bind" (Ritchie, 1992, p. 15).

The interdisciplinary, self-managed teams are composed of individuals who had been operating under a clearly defined, authoritarian system. Given the freedom to interact within a "conversation-oriented" group that is self-managing yet still embedded in a hierarchical, "conformity-oriented" system could certainly generate some frustration, if not a lot of confusion (Hackman, 1980).

SUMMARY

The creation of self-managed teams at XYZ Corporation

involved two significant changes: one of the changes dealt with group composition; the other change involved a redistribution of power. The literature I have reviewed has dealt with organizational change, power within organizations, group composition as it pertains to decision making, and finally, dealing with communication at a deeper level, I examined literature that dealt with effective communication as an interactive process within and between participants. It is at this deeper level, the level of social cognition that I believe communication at XYZ Corporation can most successfully be analyzed. From what is already known about power and group composition, two general predictions can be made: (1) Members of self-managed teams will develop a more complex view of the organization than those in functional groups such as the Claims Department; (2) Members of self-managed teams will perceive power differently than those in functional groups.

Expressed as Hypotheses

H¹ Members of service teams will develop a more complex view of others, associating a wider range of characteristics with people holding different positions than will those members working in Claims. The Claims group will view others in more polarized ways.

H² Members of the Claims Department will have a different view of relationships to the customer than will members of service teams.

H³ Members of service teams will perceive attitudes between functions as more cooperative and open than will those in the Claims Department.

H⁴ Claims Department members will view management as more authoritarian than will service teams; while service teams will view management with more uncertainty.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

A proposal describing this research project was sent to XYZ Corporation. Permission was given to compare perceptions of communication between functional and service teams at five different company branch offices. A window of three months was allowed for data collection at the different branches. Nine interdisciplinary service teams and five Claims teams were identified for the study--potentially 150-175 participants. It was agreed that after each data collection, a debriefing and immediate feedback would be provided to the participants. Prior to the collection, supervisors over each team or group would be contacted and given an opportunity to ask questions about the research. It was clearly understood that no employee would be required to participate in the research.

VARIABLES

Service teams are "self-managed," interdisciplinary groups of usually five to seven members representing field functions from different departments. The term "self-

managed" was not clearly defined within the corporation or understood by team members (as this research reveals). In concept, the teams would assume more decision making responsibility for areas where they have a direct link (such as with services provided to customers) as they develop into a mature team. Again, the vision of what a mature team looks like is rather vague from what this researcher has learned from members of the organization. Prior to working in the teams, each member had a direct functional manager; functional refers to the specific job function a team member has. In the team, each member reports to the team leader. The team and the team leader report directly to the branch manager. There are no direct functional links for members of these service teams.

Most service team members frequently leave the office and work directly with customers at their places of business. Often two or more service team members may go together to meet with the customer. The activities of the service teams involve a lot of cooperative work and coordination.

Claims, on the other hand, work in units under a supervisor. Everyone in the unit performs the same task and primarily works independently of one another. However, the Claims people are involved in coordinated service activities for customers and do communicate regularly with service team

members and customers. In addition, Claims employees have regular meetings and training sessions which focus specifically on their areas of group development and concern. Within these Claims groups there are shared technical terms and procedures that are known to the whole department. The primary differences between claims groups and service teams include: claims group members all perform basically the same type of task; each member reports directly to the same supervisor; and each member performs more "technical" and detailed work which requires much more office time. Claims members are usually thought of as "inside" people while service team members are thought of as "field" people.

SUBJECTS

This research project involves 102 service team and Claims group members as well as some indirect participation from management personnel. Team assignments were not random; rather they are a part of the organization's structures. As available, entire teams agreed to participate in this study.

A total of 51 service team members from four different corporate branches were involved in this research. The participants belonged to teams which averaged 5-7 members. Two of the nine service teams involved in this research had

been working together for over a year. The other service teams had worked together for two or less months. Some of the service team members had been involved in the team for only a few days at the time of this research. Ideally, all of the teams would have had stable membership and at least a year of experience as a group. Ideal and what is actually available don't always meet.

By coincidence, the same number--a total of 51 participants from the Claims groups--also agreed to participate (though four of the 51 participants were not available to respond to the first portion of this research). These participants belonged to team units of approximately 7-10 members. Each unit had a direct supervisor. The average member in a Claims group had spent over two years in the same department or function. Five different Claims units were involved in this project. Additional information for this research was gathered through voluntary comments made by managers within this organization.

MEASURES

Four different methods were used to gather data in this project. They are detailed in the order in which they were administered.

The first measure, a set of Likert-type scales, is used to analyze perceived communication patterns between managers and employees and co-workers from other functions and employees. The first 26 items are intended to measure perceived management communication patterns of openness or authoritarianism. These items consist of modifications from an instrument, the Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) developed to measure the same dimensions (openness or authoritarianism) within families (Ritchie, 1988, 1991). This modification was accomplished by substituting family labels for organizational ones. Where "family" and "parents" are labels used to identify relationships in the RFCP instrument, "department" and "manager" are used for the organizational context (Ritchie & Blunck, 1994). These modifications were pretested with a half dozen individuals who worked in organizations other than the one being studied. The purpose of the pretest was to determine if any question does not make sense in an organizational setting. The responses were positive--the modified questions made sense to the respondents. These same items were presented to three individuals at the organization where the study was conducted. Again, the responses suggest the questions made sense in an organizational context (see Appendix B). This modified set of scales will be referred to as the Organizational Communication Patterns instrument (OCP).

Because the relationships between managers and the two groups in this study are structured differently, "manager" is defined as immediate supervisor over the functional groups and defined as the immediate supervisor outside the service group (the branch manager). "Management" is defined as a function of decision-making and authority within the organization.

The last 19 items in the Likert set involve questions related to cooperativeness, competitiveness, and independence between groups. These items are a modification of a manager-subordinate scale (Tjosvold, Andrews, & Jones, 1983). The modifications involve the substitution of "management" for "members of other departments" (see Appendix B). The same confirmation process was used for this scale as was used for the OCP scales. The response again suggests these items have face validity; items make sense to respondents.

The second instrument used in this study is a set of 28 corporate values from which respondents identified the five most and five least important ones given their understanding of the corporate mission. Six of these values are specifically related to perceptions about customer service as a corporate value. These six values directly relate to one of the hypotheses in this study while responses to the

other 21 values are reported later in this study as additional findings.

The corporate values are reflective of written corporate and department mission statements, statements made about the corporate values in customer relations and employee materials, and statements printed as tenants and posted on walls within the corporation.

After compiling the stated and implied values from the sources mentioned, these values were then paraphrased so that the intent but not the exact wording would be used in this study (paraphrasing is done so that respondents do not just identify familiar phrases; instead, they would more likely respond to value-concepts). As with the other instruments, these 28 values were presented to members of the organization other than those who would be participating. Respondents indicated these values resonated with what they believe were the values of the corporation. Respondents in this study will be asked to simply identify the five most and five least important values given their understanding of the corporate mission (see Appendix B).

The third method of data collection used in this study is an analysis of group comments during a group activity (card-sorting) and comments made during debriefing sessions. While it would be more efficient and accurate to gather oral comments by using a tape recorder, it is not the approach

chosen for this particular organization. Early discussions with those involved in pretestings indicated an atmosphere of mistrust within this company. Using a tape recording device could represent a threat to some participants. As an option, copious notes were taken during discussions.

Because some of the card-sorting sessions include two groups at one time, the analysis will be limited to themes and general interpretations; these interpretations will be supported by comments from others (not directly involved in the study) and through the use of multidimensional scaling.

The fourth method, multidimensional scaling, is used as an interpretive tool to examine any perceived differences employees might have about others given their group membership type. Kruskal and Wish (1976) recommend as a method of gathering data, subjects sort "stimuli according to perceived similarity" (p. 10). Stimuli for this research was a group of adjectives which have been frequently used to describe attributes of others in different functional roles. The initial list of adjectives were derived from the researcher's own knowledge of the organization. This researcher spent five years working within this particular organization. One of her responsibilities involved the coordination of services among different functional groups for the customer. She often had the opportunity to act as a liaison between different departments as she carried out her

responsibilities. In addition, she had an opportunity to work with members of different groups throughout the organization while serving full time for three months on an organizational redesign task force. She had an opportunity to hear, observe, and collect data related to attitudes employees within this organization had regarding individuals working in other functions.

Based on some initial information about the company, an initial list of 22 adjectives and eight positions was generated. The positions were ones with which the groups in this study would most regularly have interactions. The number of items is arbitrary--the primary concern is that enough words are provided to create a meaningful map while still not overwhelming the participants in the process. To confirm the appropriateness of these words in this study, these adjectives were reviewed by three other individuals within the organization who would not be involved as participants. The adjectives were confirmed as ones which often are used to describe others in the organization. One of the functional words was changed to reflect a new position title which had changed since this researcher left the organization. The final list includes the following 22 adjectives: cautious, defensive, competitive, controlling, intimidating, detail-minded, empathetic, decisive, ambitious, independent, knowledgeable, professional,

competent, responsive, warm, confident, reliable, cooperative, technical, analytical, distant, and quiet. The eight positions included in the list are: Claims, Consultant, Marketing, Credit, Analyst, Auditing, Customer Billing, and Specialist.

The thirty words which were created for this study were placed on cards. Adjectives were placed on blue cards and the positions words were placed on white cards. Each card was also coded with a number and letter. Groups would record the code identification on a piece of paper according to how they sort the different words into piles.

These group-codings could then be run through a MDS computer analysis. Proximities of perceived similarities and dissimilarities as far as how groups describe others will be identified by coordinates and plotted on a "map"--a graphic representation of these perceived associations among and between group members. Two maps will be generated: the first will be a collective representation of the nine service teams; and the second will be a collective representation of the five functional groups involved in this study. Because the MDS is an interpretive tool, meaning will be inferred by analyzing differences between the convergence and divergence of coordinates between the two groups.

PROCEDURE

Arrangements were made to meet with each service team at a separate time to administer the instruments in this research. Four of the five Claims teams were available, two teams at a time. The last Claims team, consisting of ten members, was able to meet as a single group.

The organization where the research was conducted provided a meeting room or other facility to conduct the study. Participants were immediately told their involvement was voluntary. A brief introduction about the research project as a study in organizational communication is provided. A consent form is read, signed, and returned to the researcher by each participant (Appendix A). The research procedure and approximate time frame was explained. It was expected the participation time will be from approximately 60-90 minutes.

Each individual was given a packet which includes demographic questions, the scales and the ranking activity (Appendix B). Instructions were given to complete the demographic portion of the questionnaire. Participants were then told to respond to the 45 scale items according to how they individually perceive communication between themselves and others. Management was defined as the immediate supervisor for members of the Claims group. Management was

defined for the service members as the immediate supervisor *outside* the team. Participants were also encouraged to ask for clarification and note any item that does not make sense to them.

Regarding the ranking exercise, participants were instructed to identify the five most and five least important values (of the 28 listed) given their understanding of the corporate mission. They were to do this by placing the letter "M" next to the most important and "L" next to the least important values. These responses, the participants were told, are not values they think are most important; rather, they are values they believe the *organization* stresses as most important.

Then the group was given a set of 22 cards with adjectives which describe other positions within the company. The participants were told to collectively sort the adjectives into piles (clusters) that make sense to them. (Permission was asked and given by each group for the researcher to make written notes about comments made during the card-sorting activity.) The group was told they may have as many as eleven and as few as two piles. After sorting the piles of adjectives, the group was then given a set of eight position cards. They were told to match position cards with adjective clusters that make the most

sense to them. The position cards were only allowed to be placed in one adjective cluster. Finally, the group was asked to record their clusters and to write down on a sheet of paper any additional adjectives they feel should have been included which describes the positions (Appendix B).

After the questionnaires and card-sorting results were completed and collected, a debriefing was conducted with each group. Members of each group were asked to reflect on the activity in which they participated. They were also asked again if the items on the questionnaires made sense. They were then invited to give their comments and ask questions. General responses were given to the participants about the research. They were told the results would be provided to the manager overseeing the research and each team leader or supervisor would receive general group results only. No information would be provided to anyone that could jeopardize or in anyway cause difficulty for particular individuals. This was stressed because of the general climate of mistrust and concern the researcher had been told about prior to conducting research (it had been previously suggested by more than one employee at this company that the transition in the company created a lot of uncertainty among employees). All participants were heartily thanked for their involvement in the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results are presented in the order initially proposed in Chapter II.

PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS

H¹ Members of service teams will develop a more complex view of others, associating a wider range of characteristics with people holding different positions than will those members working in Claims. The Claims group will view others in more polarized ways.

To test differences in perception of others between the Claims group and the Service teams, two different methods were used; the first was a thematic analysis of spontaneous or volunteer group and individual comments. The second was a multidimensional scaling approach which was used as an additional interpretive tool.

ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Comments made during group card-sorting activities and debriefings were recorded in written form. At times, more

than one group of team members were sorting cards during the same period. Due to the limitations of this method, the analysis will be primarily limited to emerging themes and general observations. The average length of time involved for the card-sorting activity was 20-30 minutes. Where group consensus took less or more time, it was noted. Comments made by other organizational members (not directly participating in the study) were included for interpretive support. Comments which were not related to perceptions of others were also included in this analysis as they will be addressed later in this study.

Each group will be broken into its respective units. First, the service group, consisting of nine units, will be referred to as units 1-9. The first two of these units are pilot service teams (units 1 & 2)--teams that had been functioning as a unit for a year prior to this study. The remaining service teams had been together for an average of two months at the time of this study. Second, the Claims group, consisting of five units, will be referred to as units 10-14.

SERVICE TEAM UNITS

Unit One works out of a corporate branch in a rural area. A lot of joking and laughing occurred during the group

activity. At times, when group members were uncertain about how to organize their cards, a team member commented, "O.K., time for a decision" or "Let's take a vote." Other decisions were made by questioning: "Do you think 'it' really goes here?" Or: "I think this is a good idea, but what do you think?" One of the team members asked, "Where should I [referring to the job category] be placed?" Another team member spoke up and said, "Is this [referring to a pile of cards] where you would like to be? I have heard you talking on the phone and I think you are really empathetic." A lot of the discussion was involved in defining meanings. For example, time is spent defining "cautious," and "defensive."

When referring to positions that are represented within the team, comments were generally supportive. Comments about members from the Claims group were mixed. For example: "Where does 'jerk' go?" "I see we all have different views. These cards apply to all the positions in the company." "What about Claims?" "I think Claims are a little bit of everything." "Do they have any positive traits?" "Cooperative [referring to Claims]?"

Unit Two is a pilot team located at a large branch. Team members of this unit not only argued a lot during the group activity, but they also argued and used profanity

throughout their interactions. One of the members was new to the group (joining only weeks earlier) and was encouraged by other members to "speak up." All of the members in this group participated and gave their opinions. It took this unit almost 50 minutes to complete their group activity.

Like the first unit, this group also made process comments like, "do we have a consensus?" Or: "Tell me where you think the card should go--I would never make a decision for you." Comments about team members were initially directed to the individual holding a position being discussed. One member, referring to people in her position, said: "Most of the people in my position are real assholes--they love power." another member of the group then reframed what was said by stating, "yes, but *power hungry* can be good." When discussing a different position within the group, one member commented that the team's representative is a sterling example of what all people should strive for.

Like the first unit, comments about others were mixed. On one hand, group members talk about Claims as not sharing information and being controlling. One of the group members commented that "they are just young kids, most of them, anyway." Concerns were raised about stereotyping such as: "I have problems putting people in boxes," and "we are being forced to categorize."

Unit Three is an all female group. There was little laughter and joking, but a lot of silent periods and discussion. Much of the discussion was over how the group wishes to define the different adjectives used in the card-sort activity: "How do you define truly professional?" "It depends on what you are thinking of."

There were no apparent decision-making or general process comments. Comments about each position, (whether positions within the service team or not) were discussed in much the same manner. Concerns were expressed about stereotyping: "These appear to be negative connotations." "But they can be negative or positive if you think about it." "Aren't we creating the ideal or slotting people?" "If you could combine all these, you'd have a perfect person." "The old Claims were like that, but I think it is just part of their job to defend the finances of the company." "I bet claims has a whole different perception of what they are like." "But as a department as a whole, I think they have distanced themselves."

Unit Four took 45 minutes to complete the group activity. Much of the discussion concerned words and meanings: "Competitive can be a positive--we are tending

to make it negative." "If you are cautious, you are defensive." "No, not so!" "I disagree." "Let's look at this in terms of a football team, a good defense is intimidating."

Like the first three units, comments about different positions were mixed. General comments about all positions included: "All groups [positions] have certain elements" and "It is interesting how 'war' does not fit into any one category." Though one member referred to the claims group as "defensive," another member remarked: "If I had my way, claims [functional group] would be sitting at this table and be a part of this team."

Unit Five joked and laughed with each other as they did their activity. Several people talked at one time. There were a number of comments about stereotyping: "I don't think you can put those positions in any one pile." "No one can be just good or bad." "You just cannot say these people are certain things." "I have a problem saying that claims people are this or that when some are warm." "Well, no one says one size fits everything."

While members cautioned each other about stereotyping, remarks such as the following were made about both functional group members and members in the service team: "What is a good word for *patent leather shoes and polyester*

pants (referring to a team member)?" "Well, I am glad to know that!" (This is the reply of the team member to which the comment was directed--at which point the group breaks out in laughter.) "Those people are quiet." "Those are the technical ones [referring to functional positions]." "To me, if someone gets analytical and technical, it is quite intimidating."

Unit Six took about 35 minutes to complete the card sort. The sort was dominated more by two individuals in the group. Several derogatory comments were made about management [though primarily by one individual] throughout the card sorting activity. Critical comments were made about positions within and outside the team. Again, two individuals primarily dominated this group and set the tone. Comments of this type included: "They all try, but they just don't get it." "You can be ambitious and still be a jerk--how brown your nose is determines how far you go around here." "A few of us are deviants." "They are independent in a negative sense." Yet other comments in the group raised the concern again about stereotyping: "Everyone has to make decisions." "I think of professionals as exhibiting all those attributes." "I don't see any group that is not decisive."

One group member who had not commented much said: "I have a position that is difficult and often misunderstood--but I think everyone feels that way." Another individual asked how the Claims group might view people in their group.

Unit Seven was a relatively large, so the group card-sorting activity was broken into smaller subunits. A lot of laughing occurred in both card-sort groups. The comments were similar to comments made by other groups. Concerns were raised about stereotyping: "I am afraid we are *pigeon-holing* people." "You are focusing just on one individual--not the whole department." Nonetheless, there were some criticisms of the claims group such as: "We have more incompetent people in that department than I have seen in the 14 years I have been with this company." The team leader then said, "let's agree no one is going to get offended, O.K.?"

Units Eight and Nine were combined because these units work closely together and only two from each unit were available at the time of the study. Very few comments were made during the card-sort--these units decided to sort by technical vs. field positions.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FOR UNIT 1-9

Each of these units took at least 20-30 minutes to

complete the card-sort activity. Three of the units exceeded this time frame. While there were some differences in how groups process information, all of the units raised concerns about stereotyping, and offered some variety in their descriptions of themselves and others. Laughter was also a response to categorizing themselves as well as others.

In more than one unit, perceptions of others were qualified as being behaviors which are encouraged by management. Processing time included discussions over meanings and discerning individual differences within the Claims group. In general, categorizing positions was discussed as more a function of job duties rather than personal attributes of the position.

CLAIMS UNITS

Unit Ten is a large unit but only half of the members chose to participate. After reading the consent form, one of the participants withdrew. The card-sort was broken into two subunits. A lot of joking and laughing also occurred in this group--particularly as they talked about others outside their group.

One comment about stereotyping was picked up in this unit: "That fits everyone in the whole company." One of

the participants was a new member, having come from marketing which is now a service team position. When comments were made about her former position, she said it hurt her feelings. Other members of the unit told her they were not picking on her but continued to make comments that she said offended her. Most of the derogatory comments were made about the marketing position: "Stupid is an adjective that is missing when it comes to certain marketing people." Yet most of the comments about marketing were prefaced as referring to just marketing people at a certain branch within the company.

After the exercise, the individual who had formerly been in marketing told me she was having a hard time feeling like she fit in with the group because they were "different" than the type of group she came from before. She was only in that group because her position had been cut.

Unit Eleven is also quite large and was split into two groups for the card-sort. A lot of laughing and small talk occurred prior to starting the task. The first group completed the entire sort in seven minutes. The second group completed the task in less than 15 minutes. No apparent dominators were in either group. A lot of profanity and laughter continued throughout the sort. The group was able to quickly sort out others but had difficulty

describing themselves as suggested by the comment, "we are all of these things." "We are multi-talented." One of the groups used a leader who suggested possible placements of the cards. The members agreed or disagreed without much comment. Members of the other group used pointing, and taking the initiative to place cards themselves, as a means of completing the task. One of the two groups was much more quiet (the group that completed the task last). Comments about avoiding stereotyping included: "This column should apply to all the people at the company." "It is true that we do not view them [others] as we view ourselves."

Unit Twelve had an informal leader who quickly organized her group. The group responded to her. There was a lot of laughing, talking, and energy in this group. The informal leader held up one card at a time and asked for the groups' input on where to place the cards. Referring to themselves, members claimed such characteristics as being "educated," "intelligent," "hard-working," and "honest." Comments about intimidation were made about marketing. One member referred to marketing people as "the people with the *type A personalities*." Another member shared a bad experience she had with a marketing person.

During the debriefing, it was mentioned that some feel the company is very competitive and does not foster

cooperation. Someone remarked that others in the company probably see their group just like they see others-- "aggressive, defensive, negative, and hostile."

Unit Thirteen did not generate much disagreement. Some decisions were collectively made with head nods and shoulder shrugs rather than voicing opinions. One person volunteered to place cards while the other showed support--either verbally or nonverbally. There were periods of extended silence in this group as members reflected on card-sort choices. Although generally a quite group, laughter frequently erupted when they talked about positions in other departments. Comments such as: "Anyone with that much grease in their hair has to come out of a mold." Or: "yeah, that's marketing in a nutshell!" It took this group the most amount of time to define themselves. They decided that their position included all the attributes provided in the study.

Unit Fourteen asked a lot of preliminary questions about the study. One individual asked to look at the survey questions before deciding to participate. After questions were answered, the group appeared more relaxed--small talk and laughing occurred before the study was administered. This group took just under 20 minutes to complete the card sort activity. During the sort, members expressed agreement

or disagreement about the placement of other positions. Some laughing broke out when a group member held up the "marketing" card. Someone said, "money hungry." Laughter occurred again when another position was called out. When discussing their own position, a number of additional adjectives were verbalized such as "hard working," "intelligent," "on the firing line," and "responsible."

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS OF UNITS 10-14

None of these groups exceeded the 20-30 minute expected time frame for the card-sort activity. Three of the five units completed the activity in less time than expected. Some comments suggested an awareness of complex attributes in other positions, but more discussion was generally spent defining their own positions than positions outside their group. In some cases, rather than discussing attributes of certain positions, agreement was reached through gesturing, nodding, pointing, and vocalic reinforcers. Critical comments and laughter were generated most when referring to the marketing position; this was not surprising because an earlier conversation with two of the Claims managers suggested there were communication problems with Marketing--especially with one branch in particular. A tendency to categorize by "us" and "them" was observed, particularly as it related to claims and marketing positions. Other

positions peripherally related to Marketing (other field positions) such as Consultants were discussed in similar ways (though to a lesser degree).

It was observed that informal leaders emerged in each of these units to carry out the card-sort task. Little discussion on procedure or efforts to elicit responses from quieter members was observed.

COMPARISON OF SERVICE GROUP (UNITS 1-9)
AND CLAIMS GROUP (UNITS 10-14)

One of the most striking differences between the two groups was the processing time. To some degree this could be attributed to the fact that seven of the nine service teams are relatively new and may still be negotiating relationships. Yet one of the two pilot teams takes 50 minutes to process and the other pilot team takes at least the expected amount of time to process.

While both groups raised some concerns about stereotyping, these concerns were raised more often in the service groups. Also, the service groups offered explanations and encouraged discussions about ways in which they would describe functional group members (those other than members in the service teams); this was not evident in the Claims group discussions. Service teams did more categorizing by duties related to positions than attributes

they associated with positions. The Claims group tended to divide categories by attributes associated with people in certain positions--"that's marketing in a nutshell," "they [Consultants] all come out of the same mold."

Laughing about others occurred in the Claims group, but laughing about others *and* about their own members occurred in the service group. Comments about members within their (service team) own group included: "Most people in my position are real assholes," "what is a good word for patent leather shoes and polyester pants," and "a few of us are deviants."

Collectively, these differences suggest that the service teams are in the process of developing a more complex and different view of others--including those within and outside their team--than those in the Claims group. This interpretation is also suggested by the graphic representations of group perceptions generated by a multidimensional scaling method.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALING

Multidimensional scaling was used to reveal underlying cognitive structures of group members based on their perceptions of others (Kruskal & Wish, 1976). By using this method, cognitive constructs of individuals and groups of

individuals can be reflected as points on a map. Unlike most geographical maps, however, cognitive mapping can be created in more than two dimensions. According to Kruskal and Wish, the criteria used in selecting the dimension for the best solution needs to consider a minimum amount of stress in the solution and the "interpretability" of the map (p.56). "The term 'stress' refers to the amount of distortion necessary to represent [the points] in n-dimensional space" (Baker, 1993, p. 60). Increasing the dimensions creates less stress but also decreases interpretability (Kruskal & Wish, 1976). A two-dimensional solution was used in this research because of interpretability and acceptable levels of stress. The stress of the final configuration for the Claims group is .05. This configuration represents the collective results of the Claims units. The stress of the final configuration for the service group is .08. This configuration represents the collective results of the service units. Because of the low stress with the two-dimensional solution and its interpretability, a three dimensional solution is not necessary. The two-dimensional solutions represented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 include the results of a cluster analysis. The cluster analysis helps identify the strength of relationships between cognitive constructs. By analogy, the multidimensional scaling map is somewhat like a

geographical neighborhood. Points on the map represent addresses in different neighborhoods. Also by analogy, the cluster analysis would be like family relationships--though some relatives do not live in the same geographical neighborhood, there is a tie or relationship to others living at different addresses. The cluster analysis is consistent with the results of the multidimensional scaling for each group in that relationships and addresses are closely tied.

Two different interpretations are offered for each map. The first interpretation points to the influence of the dominant power structure as a mediator of communication and perceptions of others. This view emphasizes perceived modes of "dominance and personality"¹ (see Figure 1). The significance of this first interpretation becomes more evident as its dimensions are echoed again within this study.

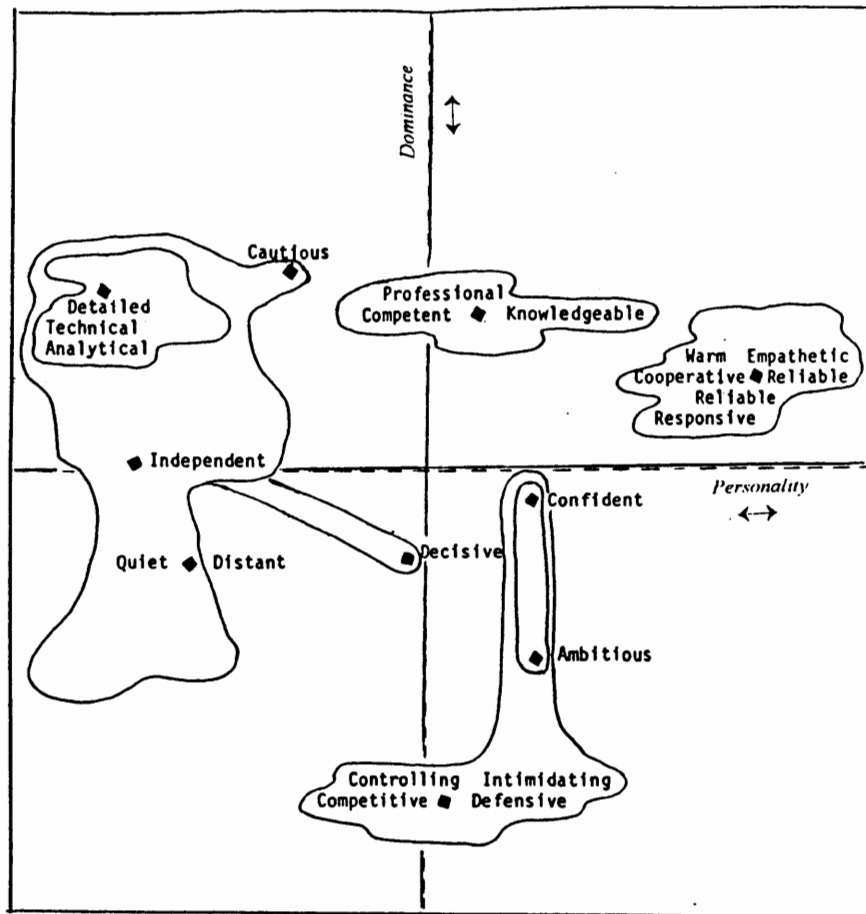


Figure 1. Claims Group: Dimensions of Dominance and Personality.

Because this map may actually reflect perceived corporate ideology, it is important to first examine it without the job positions associated with different dimensions. Looking first at the horizontal dimension, the polar opposites of "warm" and "cold" personality traits are indicated. At one end, the "technical," "detailed," "analytical" personalities operate; while the other end of

the continuum reflects the warmer, "empathetic," "cooperative," "responsive" personalities. This delineation implies the perception that there are certain "types" of people who are either "warm" or "analytical." The vertical dimension may be a reflection of dominance or bases of power (French & Raven, 1960). On one end of the spectrum are attempts to take control through "controlling," and "intimidating." These forceful, and, perhaps, coercive means of gaining power oppose another form of dominance--the dominance of legitimacy represented by competence and knowledge. Adding the job positions to these dimensions reinforces the interpretation. (See Figure 2.)

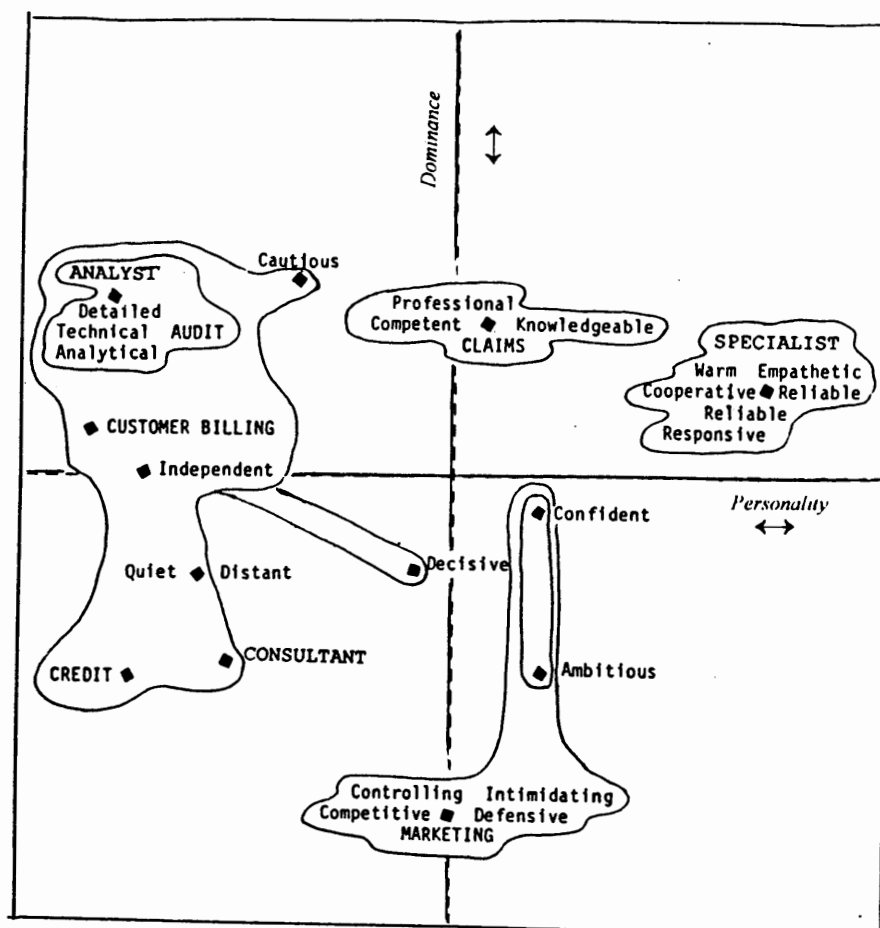


Figure 2. Claims Group with Positions: Dimensions of Dominance and Personality.

Examining the horizontal dimension, Claims placed themselves in the center of this dimension. Claims may see themselves as being technical and professional, yet still able to be warm and empathetic. The placement of their own position in the center of this dimension further indicates a more complex view of themselves but a polarized view of others.

Considering the vertical dimension (labeled *dominance*), the Claims group may see their *own power* resting in their competence and knowledge; while they view the marketing position as challenging their legitimate power through intimidation and control. This interpretation conveys the idea that the Claims group knows their role within the organization. Knowing that role implies power; given the Claims group is more directly controlled by management, a legitimate source of power, it is not unreasonable to assume Claims people may interpret modes of operating which might be contrary to their own as a challenge of power. It is interesting to note that other positions are separated by "personality type." Interpreting the vertical dimension as a perceived "power struggle" between Claims and Marketing is consistent with comments made by the Claims group about individuals in Marketing.

By the opposing power forces and categorizations of "personality types," this interpretation suggests an "us" and "them" view of others within the organization by the Claims group.

However, the first interpretation for the service team group reveals a much different picture.

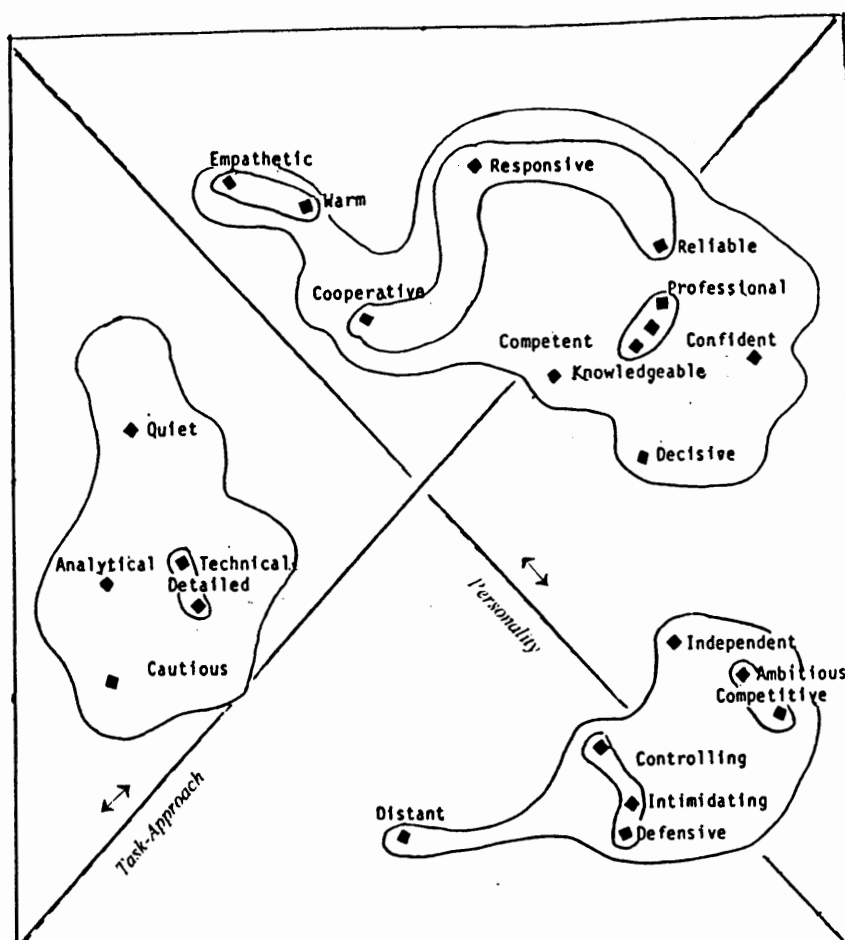


Figure 3. Service Group: Perceptions of Personality and Task-Approach.

Looking first at the *Personality* dimension, *warmth*, *empathy*, *responsiveness*, and *cooperativeness* oppose what could be interpreted as *negative* or "*anti-social*" personality traits.

The other dimension does not indicate the perception of power. Rather, this dimension suggests that the

organizational structure is more one of task-orientation or *task-approach*.

When positions are overlaid on these dimensions, a striking contrast to the Claims map is presented.

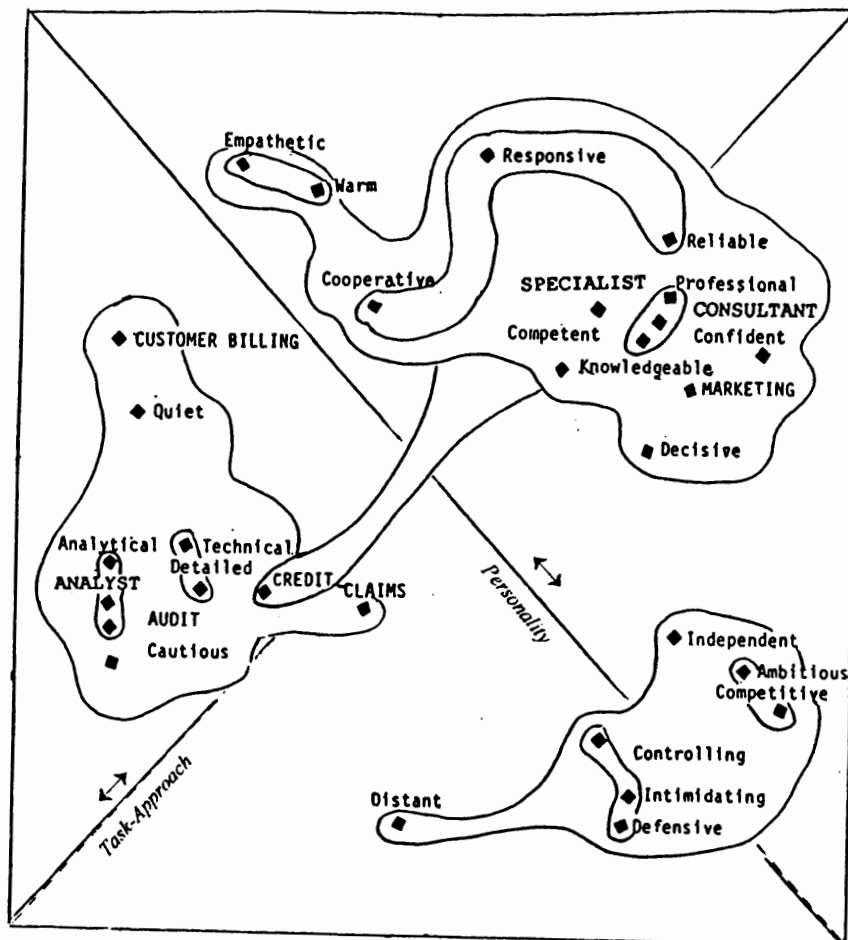


Figure 4. Service Group with Positions:
Perceptions of Personality and Task-Approach.

While the Claims group categorized other positions as personality "types," the Service group separates out what

they termed "negative" from the job positions. The Service group did not identify an "us" and "them" group in the sense that there were polar opposites--as though there were "good guys" and "bad guys."

The fact that the Service group did not identify a power dimension might suggest that they see themselves as more similar to others in the organization rather than opposed--similar but responsible for different types of tasks. Unlike the Claims group, the Service group map did not reveal a clear role identification within the organization.

The *Task Approach* dimension separates individual personalities from the type of job function which is to be performed. The claims and other "inside" functions are viewed as performing tasks which require a different kind of approach to their work than the approach "field" people must take. This separation makes sense given the types of tasks field and inside positions perform. Field positions involve a lot of customer contact. Customers expect these people to project professionalism, competence, knowledge, and decisiveness. "Inside" people, such as Claims, must attend to details and have the ability to perform technical and analytical tasks. The "inside" positions are "paper" oriented and the field positions are "people" oriented.

This first interpretation is an attempt to understand the perceptions of underlying structures within the organization. The sharp contrast in how the two groups view others may be in part due to their perceptions of the organizational structure and their perceived roles within that structure.

The second interpretation is a more general view of how each group categorizes the other. Rather than looking at dimensions, this interpretation looks at "neighborhood" quadrants to make sense of perceptual differences (see Figure 5).

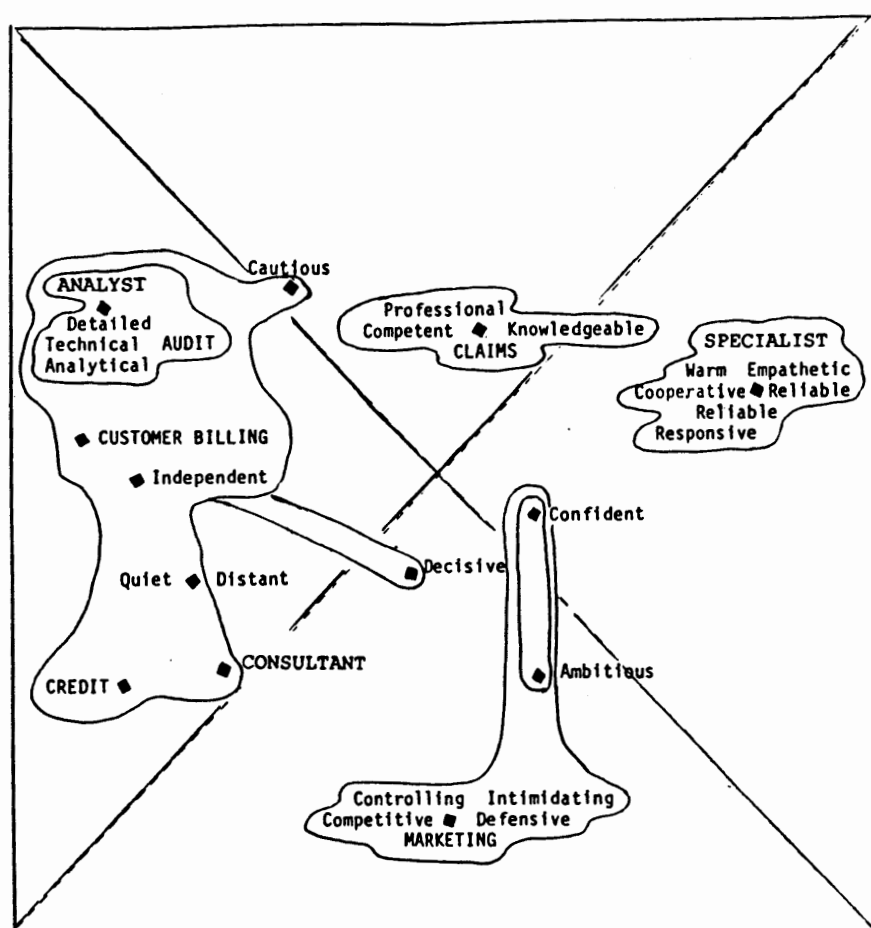


Figure 5. Claims group: second interpretation

Collectively, the units in the Claims group view marketing as a polar opposite to themselves. While the Claims group is near the apex in quadrant one, Marketing is fixed at the furthest point in quadrant three--as though marketing is located in a "neighborhood" distant from their own. The coordinates for the adjectives used to describe marketing are highly correlated--the adjectives and the

marketing position share the same "address." This strongly suggests a very polarized view of marketing. Consistent among different groups, marketing is viewed as controlling, intimidating, competitive, and defensive. These adjectives were referred to as "negatives" by different functional group members.

The coordinates for adjectives used to describe analysts, audit, specialists, and themselves are also highly correlated, again sharing the same "address." Analysts and auditors are perceived as detailed, technical, and analytical. Specialists are viewed as warm, empathetic, cooperative, reliable, and responsive. The Claims group see themselves consistently as professional, competent, and knowledgeable. The location of the coordinates for the claims position and the related adjectives also suggests a perceived relationship with the positions in the upper second and fourth quadrants--as though they live in close, but separate neighborhoods. With claims in the middle, the upper second and fourth quadrants could be interpreted as two different, but related dimensions of the claims function. This is consistent with group comments.

Credit, customer billing, and consultant positions are not attached to adjective coordinates. These positions are ones with which claims have less contact. The Consultant position straddles the third and fourth quadrant. The

position is a both a technical and field position. As represented by location on the map, the position does have a close working relationship to marketing, working often directly with marketing people in obtaining and retaining business. On the map, the consultant position has a spacial relationship to the controlling, intimidating, defensive, and competitive attributes assigned marketing. Yet, the consultant position is also located near the distant/quiet coordinates. Because claims people have little contact with Consultants, it makes sense that they would be perceived (due to their known working relationship) as similar to marketing, but at the same time, distant and quiet.

The results of this map are consistent with comments made during the card sorting activates. The Claims group tend to view others (especially marketing) in polarized ways. Adjectives which the group referred to as negative are attributed to the marketing function. Also, the distance on the cognitive space map is greatest between the claims and marketing functions. These differences can be explained using reference group theory which suggests individuals develop strong group identities and see others as either "in group" or "out group" members. The results can also be explained through the social construction of reality theory. This theory posits that individuals construct their own and collective realities through the

medium of language. Individuals who work primarily with other claims professionals have a claims orientation toward their company. The corporate world, in their view, is seen from their perspective--either others fit into that view or they do not. A group which works closely with the claims function is the Specialists. This group is cognitively constructed as closely related to the claims group. Positive adjectives are used to describe the Specialists and they can be viewed as near the same "neighborhood" as the claims group. Though not working as closely with the claims function, the auditors and analysts share similar functions in their positional charge to protect the financial stability of the company.

A much different underlying cognitive structure is revealed by the second interpretation of the service team map (see Figure 6).

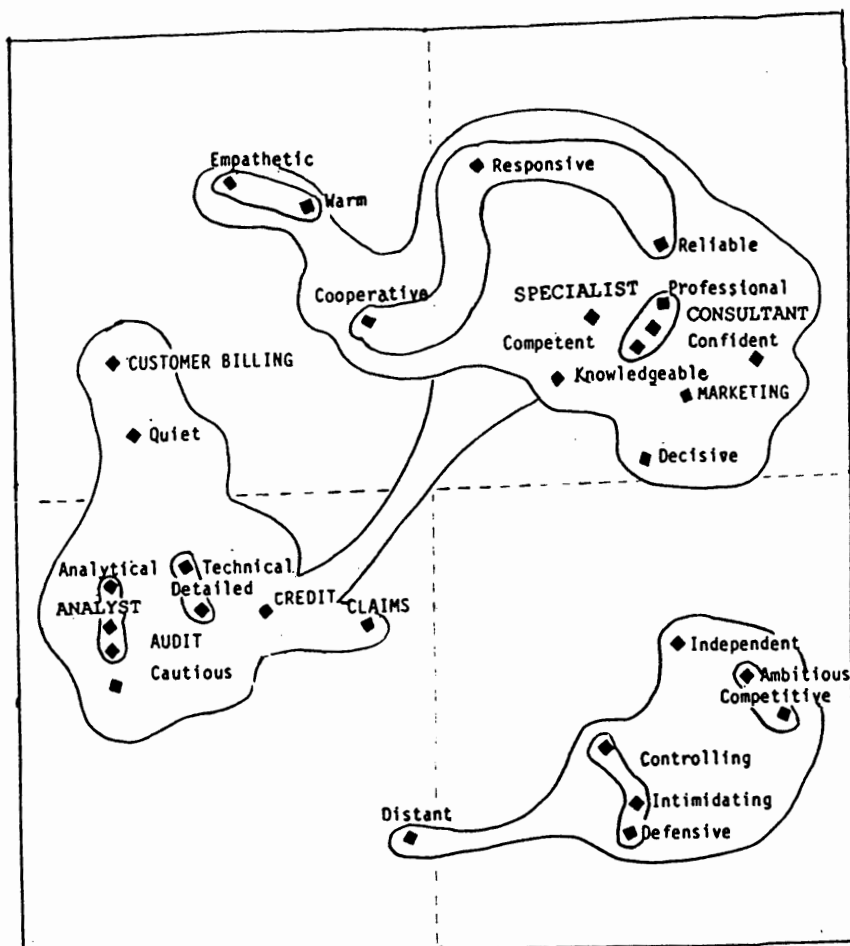


Figure 6. Service Group: Second Interpretation.

While the Claims group assigned adjectives to positions more from an "us" and "them" orientation, the isolation of "negatives" by this collective service map suggests that others in the company (those not working directly within the service team) are still seen in more complex ways. In other words, people outside the service reference group are not

seen as "the bad guys." Rather, they are seen as people who perform different kinds of functions within the company.

Consistent with comments made during the group sort, the service map reflects a perception of others as basically internal technicians (primarily quadrant three) or field people (quadrant one). Adjectives describing positions do not tend to collapse on single points as they do with the Claims group. This suggests far less stereotyping. As members of the service team worked together with different professionals, they were able to develop a more complex view of the organization. As a further example of this categorical perception, the credit function, which serves to protect the interests of the corporation and has a strong technical component to the job is also a part of the service team. The coordinate for the credit function is located in the third quadrant with other "technical" positions, yet the cluster analysis reflects the bond or relationship credit directly has with the service team.

This interpretation of the multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis also would suggest that the service team perceive their role as strongly task oriented (reliable, professional, competent, decisive, knowledgeable) yet they also identify with expressive or maintenance characteristics of group functioning identified as empathetic, warm, cooperative, and responsive. These relational and task

skills are not only components of group functioning, but may also indicate a sensitivity to their external professional and relational role with customers. This differentiation indicates a far more complex view of themselves as well as of others.

However, another interpretation was offered² for this map which sheds an entirely different light on how the service team may view others and the entire organization (see Figure 7).

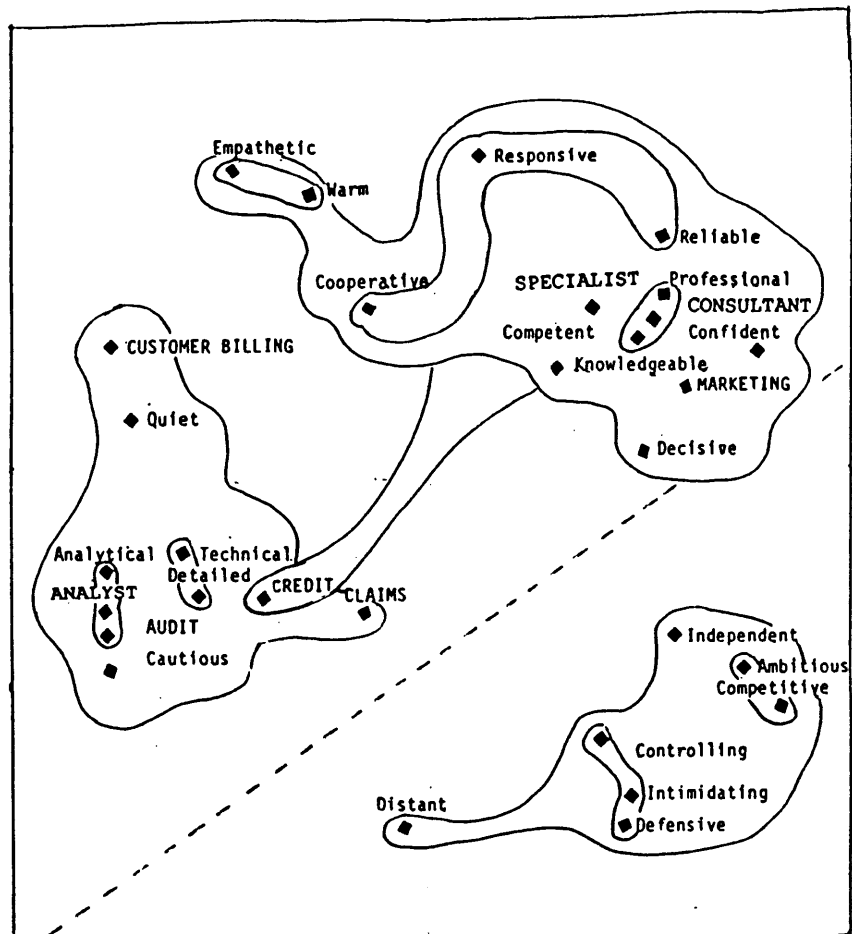


Figure 7. Unidimensional Service Interpretation

Rather than suggesting the map reveals a more complex perception of others, this interpretation would suggest that the view is simply different. In this interpretation, the service team seems to view all employees along the same task continuum. At one end of the continuum individuals perform technical, "inside" duties while at the other end, employees perform customer service-related duties. What some members

of the service group referred to as "negatives" could be viewed as extraneous characteristics of performing tasks; consequently, they "fall off" the single dimension of "task". Though this interpretation is different than the other ones offered, it is consistent with other comments made about the service group's relationship to the organization as a whole. If organizational power does mediate perceived communication, this interpretation implies that service teams may no longer see themselves embedded in a hierarchical structure.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

While it must be recognized that seven of the nine service teams are only in the initial stages of forming, both the analysis of comments and the multidimensional scaling analysis suggest that there are some perceptual differences between how the two groups view others. As the group comments and interpretations of the multidimensional scaling maps suggest, the perceived structural power may be a mediating influence in how others are viewed within the organization. However, as the last interpretation of the multidimensional scaling suggests, while members of the service members of the service teams may be developing a different view of others, this does not necessarily mean they are developing a more complex view of other positions

than are the Claims group members.

PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES REGARDING CUSTOMERS

H² Members of Claims group will have a different view of relationships to the customer than will members of service teams.

To test perceived differences regarding attitudes toward the customer, members of both the Claims group and service teams ranked corporate value statements in order of least and most importance. These rankings were based on what members, given their understanding of the corporate mission, believed are the most important values being *stressed by* the organization. Twenty-eight corporate values were presented. Embedded in the twenty-eight values were six that pertained directly to attitudes about external customers (insureds). Respondents were instructed to identify the five most and five least important values of the 28 presented. The results were scored by subtracting the number of least important rankings from the most important rankings for each value per team. The highest score derived for any one of the 28 values for the Claims group or service teams was 31; the lowest was -25.

TABLE I
VALUE RANKINGS

| ITEM | SERVICE TEAM (<u>n</u> = 51) | CLAIMS (<u>n</u> = 51) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Anticipating Customer needs. | +18 | +12 |
| 2. Communicating w/clarity. | + 3 | +19 |
| 3. Providing timely information. | + 9 | +13 |
| 4. Educating Customer. | - 4 | - 5 |
| 5. Customer feedback. | -10 | - 1 |
| 6. "Partnership" w/Customer. | - 3 | -14 |

It is interesting to note that members of both claims and service groups perceived corporate values related to the customer as moderately unimportant to moderately important (relatively speaking). These rankings are an indication of how members perceived the corporate values, not necessarily their own values. This was particularly true of the service teams. In six of the service teams it was mentioned during debriefing that the values of the corporation did not necessarily reflect the values of the team. In one group it was stated, "what is on paper and what is being done isn't necessarily the same thing." Similar remarks such as, "there is a difference between management values and our values," were made in other teams. Only one Claims unit commented on the ranking activity: "It is hard to rank these because they are all important." No questions were

raised in the Claims group about the difference in values communicated by the company and values held by the team members. This may suggest that the Claims group, which is more internally focused, views external issues in a different way than those in the service teams who are field people. Service teams work closely with customers and it is predicted that they would develop a different view of the customer and a different understanding of the organization's view of the customer than functional groups would. If this is the case, attitudes about the customer should be dependent upon group type. To test this, chi-squares are calculated for each item and for the composite customer service value.

TABLE II
ANTICIPATING CUSTOMER NEEDS

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|----|-------|-------|
| Service | 19 | 31 | 1 | 51 |
| Claims | 17 | 29 | 5 | 51 |
| Total | 36 | 60 | 6 | 102 |

There is not sufficient evidence* to suggest that anticipating customer needs is dependent on group type, X^2 (2, $N = 102$) = 2.84, n.s.

TABLE III
COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|----|-------|-------|
| Service | 6 | 42 | 3 | 51 |
| Claims | 19 | 32 | 0 | 51 |
| Total | 25 | 74 | 3 | 102 |

Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that *communicating with clarity* is dependent on group type, X^2 (2, $N = 102$) = 11.11, $p < .05$. The fact that the Claims group perceived a corporate value of communicating with clarity as more important than the service teams is not surprising, given the nature of inside technical positions vs. field positions. Much of the communicating Claims group members do with customers is over the telephone and may deal with specific legal statutes and regulations. Field personnel may be just as aware of the need for clear communication in that their roles require continual contact with customers. Yet service personnel may not perceive that the corporation values this communication. Again, it was pointed out repeatedly by service units that what they valued and what the corporation valued were not necessarily the same. The Claims group did not distinguish this difference.

TABLE IV
PROVIDING TIMELY INFORMATION

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|----|-------|-------|
| Service | 12 | 36 | 3 | 51 |
| Claims | 18 | 28 | 5 | 51 |
| Total | 30 | 64 | 8 | 102 |

There is not sufficient evidence* to suggest that *providing timely information* is dependent on group type, X^2 (2, $N = 102$) = 2.70, n.s.

TABLE V
EDUCATING THE CUSTOMER

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|----|-------|-------|
| Service | 0 | 47 | 4 | 51 |
| Claims | 3 | 40 | 8 | 51 |
| Total | 3 | 87 | 12 | 102 |

There is not sufficient evidence* to suggest that *educating the customer* is dependent on group type, X^2 (2, $N = 102$) = 4.90, n.s.

TABLE VI
CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|----|-------|-------|
| Service | 0 | 41 | 10 | 51 |
| Claims | 3 | 44 | 4 | 51 |
| Total | 3 | 85 | 14 | 102 |

There is not sufficient evidence* to suggest that *customer feedback* is dependent on group type, $X^2 (2, N = 102) = 4.90, n.s.$

TABLE VII
CUSTOMER PARTNERSHIPS

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|----|-------|-------|
| Service | 6 | 36 | 9 | 51 |
| Claims | 2 | 33 | 16 | 51 |
| Total | 8 | 69 | 25 | 102 |

There is not sufficient evidence* to suggest that *customer partnerships* are dependent on group type, $X^2 (2, N = 102) = 4.14, n.s.$

*While these chi-square results for each item only provided weak support for attitudes about the customer being dependent on group type, these tests were based on the assumption that "at most 20% of the expected frequencies are less than 5" (Weiss & Hassett, 1991, p. 560). In each of

the item tests, expected frequencies were less than five in two cells; the item tests did not meet the expected frequency assumption and therefore cannot be considered conclusive.

As a means of increasing expected frequency, the items are collapsed into a single contingency table. This table represents how each group perceives the importance of customer service to the corporation, given their understanding of the corporate mission statement.

TABLE VIII
CUSTOMER SERVICE AS A CORPORATE VALUE

| | Most | In | Least | Total |
|---------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| Service | 43 | 233 | 30 | 306 |
| Claims | 62 | 206 | 38 | 306 |
| Total | 105 | 439 | 68 | 612 |

Note: These are rankings, not ratings. "Most" refers to the top five out of 28 values. "Least" refers to the lowest five, and "In" is the ranking for all values in-between.

Using the collapsed data, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that perceptions of how much value the corporation places on customer service is dependent on group type, X^2 (2, $N = 612$), $p < .05$.

Given the service groups' unique position of working directly with customers, they are in a position to better assess how well the corporation is really responding to the needs of the customer--service team members are aware that "what the company says on paper and what they really do aren't always the same thing."

The Claims group, on the other hand, does not have the same capacity to judge customer service effectiveness. Their responses are much more polarized than the service group. This polarization may be an indication that the Claims group is torn between service to the customer and service to the company³. It also may be that their responses reflect the messages they perceived as being reinforced by their direct supervisors and managers.

Comments made by service team members about customers and the results of the collapsed data indicate there is a significant difference between the perceptions the functional group and the service group have about customers. These findings are consistent with the second hypothesis: Members of the Claims group do have a different view of relationships to the customer than do members of the service group.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF COOPERATION
BETWEEN POSITIONS

H³ Members of service teams will perceive power between functions as more cooperative and open than will the Claims group.

To test this hypothesis, a six point Likert scale adapted from Tjosvold, Andrews, and Jones' (1983) Leader Behavior Scales is used. The modified scale is designed to measure perceptions of cooperation, competition, and independence between different functions rather than between managers and employees. Because all service teams in a geographical location participated in this study and therefore are not random, inferential statistics are not used to measure differences; instead, means are reported for the concept of cooperation--the concept relevant to this study.

Initially, the reliability for the seven items in the modified cooperation scale was low, $\alpha = .18$. Running a Person Correlation Coefficient analysis suggested two subscales which will be referred to as cooperative-task and cooperative-individual. The items in the cooperative-task subscale intuitively make sense because they imply a cooperative effort toward the completion of a task; while items in the cooperative-individual scale relate more to signs of encouragement and support between members of

different department.⁴ The task/emotional split is consistent with group roles suggested by Robert Bales (1970; 1979). The items in the cooperative-task subscale ($\alpha = .67$) included: others pass on important information; members of other departments are pleased with my success; and members of other departments share ideas and resources. The multidimensional scaling maps also revealed these same dimensions. Using the six-point Likert scale as a measure, the means for both groups were essentially the same. The Claims group mean was 2.97 and the service team was 2.86 (standard deviations are 1.04 and .84, respectively). A value of 2 indicates "somewhat disagree" and a value of 3 indicates "somewhat agree." Thus, these results indicate that both groups somewhat agreed that cooperation does exist between functions--at least when it comes to accomplishing tasks. However, with regard to cooperation as defined by perceptions of encouragement toward individual objectives, the results of the cooperative-individual subscale ($\alpha = .65$) suggest the groups somewhat disagreed. The items in this subscale include: others show concern for what I want to accomplish; others help me find ways to achieve my objectives; I learn a lot when I interact with others; and others help me to a good job. The mean for the Claims group was 1.70, and the mean for the team was 1.88 (standard deviations are .94 and .92, respectively).

Using the six-point Likert scale as a measure, results of both the Claims group and service teams indicate that there is little difference in perceptions about cooperation between the two groups. The third hypothesis predicting a higher perception of cooperation and openness among service team members is not supported.

PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES REGARDING MANAGEMENT

H⁴ Claims group members will view management as more authoritarian than will service teams; while service teams will view management with more uncertainty.

To examine the differences in views about management, first comments which were made during debriefings and offered by others voluntarily throughout the research project were examined. Then the OCP instrument was used to measure perceived differences in views the two groups have about management.

THE CLAIMS GROUP

During the debriefing for each group, members were asked if the questionnaires had made sense. All five of the units in the Claims group indicated that the questions related to relationships about management made sense. Very few comments were made, however about management during the

debriefing. Most of the comments about management were made privately, after other unit members leave the room. One member asks if "XYZ will listen to us, or will these results just end up in someone's drawer?" Another member confided that one person in her unit was concerned about losing her job if she participated in the survey and answered honestly (even though confidentiality had been stressed). Another person shared that it felt like they were "*blowing the whistle on management.*"

One of the unit supervisors indicated that his team would not be very open during discussions. Another team supervisor said her team would be "very open and honest." None of the functional units made many open comments--at least not about management.

A couple of general observations: (1) Informal leaders emerged during card sorting within the Claims group. Unit members tended to follow the suggestions of the informal leader without too much disagreement. This may suggest an acceptance of authority, whether formal or informal, as just the way it is. It is also interesting to note that no comments were made about management in the presence of the informal leaders. (2) Concerns were raised about confidentiality before and after participation by Claims members. As implied by some of the comments made privately,

consequences of participation may have been feared by group members.

SERVICE TEAM GROUP

During debriefing, comments from the service units indicated that there was some uncertainty about boundaries and about to whom members are to report. A member of one group said they were not sure what "management wants from them." There were nods of agreement. Another member said, "we only figure out what they want from us when we *hit a brick wall*." Others expressed frustration because they did not know what "they" wanted.

In five of the units uncertainty was expressed about how they are to define management with regard to the survey. In one unit, the relationship between themselves and management was described as "*a carousel ride*." Members again asked, "what does management want?" In this same unit, the communication between the team and management was described as "*a big phone cord line which has been cut*." Says another member, "we are getting a lot of mixed messages."

What is expressed in these units was reinforced by individuals not directly involved in this study. One of the individuals who initially helped coordinate this study at

the company said the teams were very frustrated because boundaries are not clear. She also said management does not understand what they have accomplished. Management, she said, wants something measurable but not all results are so easily measured.

As stated by one of the newer managers at this company, "a lot of confusion exists in this company about rules . . . teams do not have a clear sense of power, messages from management are mixed." He said a lot of teams are very frustrated.

One team member confided after others in his unit left the room, "there are a lot of hard changes, I mean, well, management has changed a lot--I can't talk about it some other time."

Another individual expressed frustration over lack of support her team had been getting. She said the executive who had acted as a liaison and support told her that *"it is important to know which battles you can win and which ones are best to forget."* She went on to say, "things are very political--managers have their ears plugged--morale is way down."

The direct manager over five of the nine service teams said the whole idea of teams is just a lot of "hype." He said it is like the story of the *Emperor's New Clothes*--they

have nothing to show but everyone is pretending like they do. After expressing this view, this manager then told me he does "fully support the team effort, however."

Though frustration is expressed by most of the team units, one unit (the female unit) thought management would probably support their efforts if "they put their heads together and came up with a better way of doing things."

One of the managers who is not directly involved with the teams expressed interest and excitement about the changes which were going on in the company. She claimed a lot of positive improvements were being made. However, she cautioned, she had heard "rumblings that some teams were uncomfortable."

General observation: During the card sort activity, members in some of the units openly criticized management. A member of one unit suggested that a category for management needs to be included in the study so that they would have a position to "tie all the negative adjectives to." These remarks reinforce the interpretation of the multidimensional scaling map--an interpretation which suggested the service teams are not able to clearly identify their role within the organizational structure.

COMPARISON OF CLAIMS AND SERVICE GROUPS

The metaphor, "*blowing the whistle on management*" is a revealing one in terms of the relationship between functional members and management. Members of this group expressed concerns about the consequences of participating in the survey. Little was expressed openly, though comments about management are made secretly. Members of the Claims group respond consistently with regard to their perceived relationship to management. Managers are in charge. Managers have power. Going against management may result in undesirable consequences. Again, as suggested earlier by an interpretation of a multidimensional scaling map, the Claims group is very aware of the power structure within the organization. They are able to identify their role within that structure of dominance.

Unlike the Claims group's more consistent, hierarchical view of management, metaphors used by the service team such as, "*hitting a brick wall*," "*like a carousal ride*," and "*having the phone lines cut*," can be viewed as indications of frustration and uncertainty. As suggested in on of the multidimensional scaling maps, the Service group may not recognize the power structure that still exists within the organization. Yet evidence of that structure could be found

in such examples as a war metaphor suggested by one manager with regard to the relationship between the teams and management: *"it is important to know which battles you can win and which ones are best forgot."* This war metaphor is particularly interesting in that it may be an indication of continued management power and control through the use of language "metaphors involve entire systems or domains of meanings" (Sackmann, 1989, p. 466). As stated by Dennis Mumby (1988), "metaphors serve to produce and reproduce the organizational structure that they describe. Thus symbols both regulate and constitute organizational reality" (p. 18).

On one hand, the service teams are told they are empowered. When they try to define the extent of their power, they experience frustration. Both group members and managers suggested that mixed messages were being received by the teams. Though one unit did not share the frustration expressed by the other units; perceptions of management are not as clear and uniform among service team members as they are in the Claims group.

Perceptions expressed about management in the Claims group indicate an authoritarian view of management. Perceptions expressed by the service teams suggest an uncertain view about the relationship with management.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
PATTERN INSTRUMENT

The Organizational Communications Pattern instrument was also used to test this hypothesis. It is expected that the two dimensions in the FCP instrument will also be consistent in the OCP instrument. These dimensions are openness-orientation and authority-orientation. However, an initial factor analysis suggested three dimensions related to openness and two dimensions related to the authority-orientation. Reliability analyses supported this initial interpretation (see Table IX).

TABLE IX
SUB SCALE RELIABILITIES

| ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED | SCALE/ ITEM | ITEM CORRELATION |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| OPEN-TASK (Alpha = .83) | | |
| Consider both sides of the issue | .53 | .84 |
| Discussion of team accomplishments | .61 | .82 |
| Plans for the future | .78 | .74 |
| Encouraged to challenge ideas | .75 | .75 |
| OPEN-INDIVIDUAL (Alpha = .79) | | |
| Manager asks opinion | .47 | .81 |
| Feelings discussed in dept. | .83 | .62 |
| Enjoy talking w/manager | .49 | .79 |
| Manager likes opinions | .66 | .72 |
| OPEN-TRUST (Alpha = .66) | | |
| Manager encourages expression of feelings | .37 | .72 |
| Important say in decisions | .52 | .51 |
| Tell manager anything | .51 | .47 |
| AUTH-TASK (Alpha = .75) | | |
| Go along without question | .61 | .66 |
| Or some things not said | .57 | .67 |
| Suborn not disagree | .43 | .73 |
| Management last word | .45 | .72 |
| Obey w/o question | .49 | .71 |
| AUTH-INDIVIDUAL (Alpha = .78) | | |
| Manager not questioned | .56 | .75 |
| Not approve, not hear | .49 | .78 |
| Don't know what talking about | .64 | .71 |
| Manager irritated w/views | .70 | .67 |

Similar logic to that used with the cooperative-task and cooperative-individual subscales was used to make sense of the subscales indicated by the factor analysis. Items

can be interpreted as group by a task orientation or by an individual orientation with the exception of three items. These three items which correlate together were labeled "open-trust" as they imply.

An ANOVA is run for each of the subscales: Open-task, $f(1,96) = 2.43$, $p < .12$; Open-Ind, $f(1,96) = .019$, n.s.; Open-trust, $f(1,96) = 2.61$, $p < .11$; Auth-task, $f(1,96) = .103$, n.s.; and Auth-ind, $f(1,96) = .438$, n.s. None of ANOVA tests for these subscales reached significant difference, though near significance with the Open-task and Open-trust subscales.

A correlation analysis was run to examine the relationships between the subscales which were developed.

TABLE X
SUBSCALE CORRELATIONS

| | OPEN/TASK | OPEN/IND | OPEN/TRUST | AUT/TASK | AUT/IND |
|------------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|---------|
| OPEN/TASK | 1.00 | | | | |
| OPEN/IND | -.51 | 1.00 | | | |
| OPEN/TRUST | .15 | -.05 | 1.00 | | |
| AUT/TASK | -.37 | .57 | -.13 | 1.00 | |
| AUT/Ind | .58 | -.51 | .09 | -.41 | 1.00 |

Items in two of the subscales ("authority-task" and "open-individual") were reversed coded.⁵ "High intercorrelations among four of the five subscales suggest

that these four may measure different aspects of a single underlying construct" (Ritchie & Blunck, 1994, p. 12). The one subscale which is not highly correlated is the "open-trust" subscale. A reliability analysis indicated a single scale rather than four subscales. This new scale is referred to as the "Open-auth" scale.

TABLE XI
OPEN-AUTH: ITEM RELIABILITIES

| Items (Alpha = .89) | Item Correlation | Alpha if Item Deleted |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Both sides of Issue | .37 | .89 |
| Discuss team accomplishments | .45 | .89 |
| Plans for future | .74 | .88 |
| Encouraged to challenge ideas | .76 | .88 |
| Manager not questioned | .58 | .88 |
| Don't know what talking about | .52 | .89 |
| Not approve, no hear | .46 | .89 |
| Manager irritated w/views | .65 | .88 |
| Manager Asks Opinion(-) | .38 | .89 |
| Feelings Discussed(-) | .71 | .88 |
| Enjoy talking w/ manager(-) | .51 | .88 |
| Manager likes opinions(-) | .73 | .88 |
| Obey W/O question(-) | .39 | .89 |
| Go along w/o question(-) | .44 | .89 |
| Or some things not said(-) | .48 | .89 |
| Subboard not disagree(-) | .28 | .89 |
| Management last word(-) | .70 | .88 |

In an independent study (Ritchie & Blunck, 1994) within a private educational institution, the OCP instrument was used with similar findings. The same subscales and

equivalent reliabilities were developed: Open-task ($\alpha = .83$); Open-individual ($\alpha = .79$); Open-trust ($\alpha = .59$); Authority-task ($\alpha = .85$); and Authority-individual ($\alpha = .81$). High intercorrelations were also found among four of the subscales which resulted in the same complex dimension ($\alpha = .93$), as in this study.

This new scale suggests a complex perception of the relationship between management and subordinates. As suggested by Ritchie and Blunck (1994), it can be viewed as a continuum:

On one end we find the items related to "open-task" and "authority-individual." High responses to these items might suggest a relationship where the individual experiences an open communication environment related to work tasks, but is discouraged from off-task chit-chat. On the other end we find the items related to "authority-task" and "open-individual." High responses to these items could suggest an environment where the worker is expected to obey management without question, yet is encouraged to talk freely about irrelevant issues. (p. 15)

The respective means for each of the subscales composing this new scale fall in the "somewhat agree" response range. The means, however for the "Auth-task/Open-ind" end of the continuum were more similar than the "Open-task/Auth-Ind. end. The means for the service group and Claims group respectively were for: "Auth-task" ($\bar{M} = 2.63$, $\bar{M} = 2.69$); "open-ind" ($\bar{M} = 2.48$, $\bar{M} = 2.45$); as compared to

"open-task" (\bar{M} = 2.64, \bar{M} = 3.00); and "auth-ind" (\bar{M} = 2.55, \bar{M} = 2.70).

The means for the Claims group would suggest a stronger perception of management as encouraging and facilitating open communication with regard to tasks, but discouraging any small talk while performing the job. This is consistent with the comments made during debriefings. Claims members indicated a reluctance to talk openly about issues other than the task at hand; while service members implied that they were not receiving the kind of communication from management that would enable them to perform their tasks. Referring again to interpretations of the multidimensional scaling maps, an important difference in how the two groups perceived the organization was indicated. The Claims group indicated an awareness that they operated within a hierarchical structure--a structure of dominance and control. The Service group, which is also embedded in a power structure reflected a perception of task dominance rather than power dominance. To the Service group, their perception of task performance may go outside the lines of organizational structure--at least until they "*hit a brick wall.*"

Using this new scale, an ANOVA was run but indicates no statistical significance between the service and

functional groups, $f(1,96) = .388$.

Because all but two of the service teams were less than two months old in this study, it was difficult to measure the effects of the team on perceived communication if teams with little experience operating as a new group were included. Therefore two other comparisons were made. First, the service teams with over a year of experience were compared with the functional groups, $f(1,60) = 2.34$. A comparison of the pilot teams and other service teams was made, $f(1,49) = 1.97$. While there appear to be some differences between the different groups, it was not significant. It may take a much greater period of time to accurately measure perceptual changes than this study has allowed.

Although the OCP scale did not provide support for perceived differences in how each group viewed management, comments made by both groups suggest differences may exist. The Claims group concerned themselves with "*blowing the whistle on management*" while service group members complained that their relationship to management was like "*a carousel ride*." Consequently, though strong support for the third hypothesis cannot be claimed, group comments are consistent with the hypothesis: Claims group members will view management as more authoritarian than will service

teams while service teams will view management with more uncertainty.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

The ranking activity, used to measure perceptual differences about the customer, also included the identification of 21 other corporate values (Appendix B).

By displaying the rankings hierarchically (Table XII), a rather interesting contrast was revealed. Both groups perceived that the values the corporation most stressed deal with results. Yet the values both groups perceived the corporation least values pertains to rewarding results and recognizing the value of the individual employee. What is especially noteworthy in these findings is that all twenty-eight of these values are either implicitly or explicitly communicated by management. Some of these values are written on posters in conference rooms, etc. The comment one employee in a service team made saying "what management puts on paper and what is being done is not necessarily the same thing," captures what is reflected in these rankings.

Consider where employees of both groups rank "operating with integrity and fairness"--employees give it a ranking of -1. Yet integrity and fairness is espoused by management as being of utmost importance. Also consider where employees of both groups rank "empowering employees to act"--they gave

it a ranking of -17. What is most interesting to note is that the service group rated this as a -10 and the Claims group rated it as -6. This suggests the service groups--the "empowered," self-managed teams--recognize the double-bind of being "empowered" yet under the authority and power of a dominate structure--though the lines of that authority may not be clear to them.

It could be that perceived values--those values that group members believe the company actually supports (as opposed to merely giving lip service to) can be interpreted very nicely as a dichotomy of task vs the value of the individual. This perception is consistent with the OCP scale, "Open-auth." Ritchie and Blunck suggest that at one extreme of the "Open-auth" scale, employees perceive an environment where:

the workers is expected to obey management without question, yet is encouraged to talk freely about irrelevant issues. One might interpret this as a means for management to gain additional control through the exploitation of interpersonal relationships. This kind of relationship might be somewhat analogous to a parent telling a child they are valued--but they won't continue to be valued if they don't obey and produce. (1994, p.15).

If the results of these value rankings reflect this sort of dichotomy, then it is not difficult to understand the high level of frustration service team members have expressed. While the service teams may be experiencing a

double-bind; the Claims members more or less "know the score." Service team members are encouraged to communicate new ideas and experience empowerment as individuals. Yet, whenever they have attempted to stretch their wings, they too, are reminded of a corporate reality: they are still service teams functioning in a very powerful, hierarchical structure (see Table XII).

TABLE XII
PERCEIVED VALUE RANKINGS: INTERPRETATION OF
THE CORPORATE MISSION

| Item | Value Summary (N = 102) | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | <u>Score = Most - Least Important</u> | | |
| | C.S. (N = 51) | Claims (N = 51) | Combined Score |
| 1. Focusing on results as a company. | +31 | +19 | +50 |
| 2. Attract/retain profitable bus. | +31 | +17 | +48 |
| 3. Maintain financial stability. | +27 | +18 | +45 |
| 4. Setting/meeting aggressive goals. | +12 | +2 | +33 |
| 5. Anticipating needs. | +18 | +1 | +30 |
| 6. Leadership as Ins. Co. | +12 | +16 | +28 |
| 7. Communicating with clarity to customers | + 3 | +19 | +22 |
| 8. Providing timely info. | + 9 | +1 | +22 |
| 9. Continually Improving | + 8 | +14 | +22 |
| 10. Developing new/better automated systems. | +11 | - 3 | + 8 |
| 11. Training/development. | + 4 | + 3 | + 7 |
| 12. Common Corp. purpose. | - 6 | + 8 | + 2 |
| 13. Operating w/integrity and fairness. | + 1 | - 2 | - 1 |
| 14. Improving internal coordination/commun. | - 5 | 0 | - 5 |
| 15. Educating customer. | - 4 | - 5 | - 9 |
| 16. Customer feedback. | -10 | - 1 | -11 |
| 17. Working cooperatively. | - 3 | -12 | -15 |
| 18. Attention to details. | -12 | - 4 | -16 |
| 19. Empowering employees to act. | -10 | - 6 | -16 |
| 20. I.d. of poor risks. | -10 | - 7 | -17 |
| 21. Business partnerships. | - 3 | -14 | -17 |
| 22. Understanding policies & regulations. | -14 | - 7 | -21 |
| 23. Rewarding results. | - 8 | -14 | -22 |
| 24. Assuming individual responsibility. | - 5 | -18 | -23 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 25. Receiving reg. feed- | | | |
| back from managers. | -12 | -12 | -24 |
| 26. Individual importance. | -15 | -24 | -39 |
| 27. Respecting differences. | -26 | -22 | -48 |
| 28. Decreasing paper flow. | -24 | -25 | -49 |

Preliminary results of this research have been presented to the manager through whom this research was facilitated at "XYZ" Corporation. Though much of what he received was in summary form and carefully edited for any "red flags" a certain amount of surprise was detected. After reviewing the summary of findings, the manager quickly responded by saying, "well, we have to remember that this is only a snapshot in time--and only from one particular angle." He was right, of course, but this research project does prove to capture a rather interesting angle which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

H¹ (Members of service teams will develop a more complex view of others than will Claims group members) is supported.

H² (Members of the Claims group will have a different view of relationships with customers than will members of service teams) is supported.

H³ (Members of service teams will perceive attitudes between functions as more cooperative and open than will the Claims group) is not supported.

H⁴ (Claims group members will view management as more authoritarian than will service teams; while service teams will view management with more uncertainty) is partially supported.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This research did represent a unique opportunity to take a "snapshot" of perceived communication during organizational change at one particular organization. The angle chosen for this portrait focused on: Different social constructions of reality between two groups; and how power mediated the communication of those realities. The results of this study, though mixed, suggest a growing difference in how Service teams, as opposed to Claims teams, understand the organization and their role in it.

LIMITATIONS

This study represents a view of a particular organization from a complex perspective. Extending the photo analogy further, the use of a wide-angle lens was necessary to capture the dominate features at XYZ. The choice to take a broad perspective was in part due to the constraints which were placed on this research by the organization.

First, because the organization is still in the process of unfolding its new organizational structure, management expressed interest in getting general feedback on how teams and functional groups were perceiving communication during organizational change. In part, the design of this study was negotiated between the interests of the researcher and the interests of the organization.

Second, recognizing not only the ethical responsibilities that are inherent in this type of research, but also the sensitive political nature within the organization, the type of questions which could be posed was limited. For example, it may have been interesting from a research perspective to probe more into attitudes about authority and control in the functional group. However, such probes would have been inappropriate in this organization. Comments made about management were related to the questions presented in research and were not solicited from participants.

Further, there were strict time constraints on this project. A window of approximately three months was allowed for data gathering and reporting back preliminary findings to the organization. Arrangements had to be made to meet the schedules of 14 different teams at five different corporate branches. Participation time limits were agreed upon in advance of the study. Though the organization was

very generous in providing time and facilities, these limits were respected.

In addition to limits placed on the study by the organization, the design of the study had its own limits. Although access was a primary consideration in choosing the organization for this study, the fact that the organizational redesign process is still in the early stages of development limits the potential findings of this research. Seven of the nine teams in the independent group were less than two months old. For many of the newer service team members, it was difficult to define who their manager really was or how their relationship to management might have changed. As could be inferred from the ANOVA test of the pilot teams compared to the other service teams for the OCP "Open-auth" scale, it takes time to develop a group reality. Given time, a much more sharply focused picture may emerge.

Finally, the fact that this researcher was a former employee for five years within XYZ must be addressed. As a former member of the redesign task force and organizing member of a pilot team, she is not without bias. Recognizing this, more than one method was used to test results where possible, given the other constraints of this study. Also, pretests were conducted to counter any assumptions she may have made in developing her instruments.

Still, it must be acknowledged that the picture of XYZ as revealed in this study has been framed to some degree by the choices made by her.

IMPLICATIONS

One of the most predominant implications of this study may be the development of a separate organizational realities within the organization. "Self-managed" teams are developing a new reality through a the process of communication exchange rather than through the product of organizational restructuring. Even though this research proposed to examine the differences in perceptions between functional and self-managed service groups, an outcome of this research hints at a much more complex set of realities than first anticipated. XYZ is a system making some structural changes. Yet, structural changes are not the same as the "paradigm" shifts managers at this organization so often spoke about. "A clear majority of business executives today remain personally uncommitted--or they do not fully understand and truly support what they are committed to" (Hagan, 1994, p. 2). As one manager had said, he thought teams were just a bunch of "hype" but he fully supported them. Another manager allegedly admitted he was withdrawing his support because he knew which battles could be won and which ones could not. Whether in functional or

service groups, members of both indicated an awareness of structural changes without any attitude changes. Corporate posters and mission statements nailed to conference walls have not convinced employees that management shares the same reality that they do.

As the OCP instrument, the ranking exercise, and various metaphors indicated, employees in both groups were able to distinguish the importance of task objectives within the hierarchical system as a predominate message over the recognition or empowerment of the individual.

As suggested by the development of the "Open-auth" scale in the OCP instrument, efforts to facilitate open communication by management may be perceived by employees as a means of further control rather than empowering or valuing them; communication either facilitates tasks or reduces employees to "children" in a "parent/child" relationship. This emphasis on task over individual is reflected in the ranking activity as well.

At the core of the employees' reality, is an awareness of the implicit power that exists regardless of what structural changes are made or tenants are published. Claims team members are cautious about what they will openly discuss or about *"blowing the whistle on management."*

In service teams, bosses may be called "facilitators" but they are still in charge. Service team members have tested their own power and have experienced "*hitting a brick wall.*" This frustration which service team members expressed was shared with the manager facilitating this research project. His comment was "it is sort of like giving a child a piece of new equipment. We could show the child how to use it, but wouldn't it be better for the child to discover it himself?"

If boundaries are to be discovered by such undirected experimentation, then frustration will likely continue for some time.

With the recognition that terms like "self-managed" teams, "participatory management," and "empowerment" being thrown around in many organizational circles with almost reckless abandon, a concern that this research raises is that those concepts should be clearly defined and understood by organizations and their members before attempting to implement change. Although organizational redesign is a process rather than a product, some thought needs to be given as to how that process is going to unfold each step of the way. What are the initial boundaries within which the teams must operate? These boundaries should be explicitly stated rather than understood only through trial and error.

Employees' reality may be not only separated from management because of the contradictions perceived by employees regarding management communication (Boxx, Odom, & Dunn, 1991), but may also be separated through social construction. Employees in both groups have experienced a shared sense of belonging through their respective reference groups which has been reinforced by their interactions among themselves. Indications were found in both groups that an identity of "we" as separate from the rest of the organization existed. This sense of "we" as an identity may have two levels. The first level can be found in the individual teams. Members may refer to themselves as "us" or "we" and others as "them." The second level, which was also apparent within both groups links the employees of both groups to the "us" ranks of the "enlisted" under the "them" ranks of the ever-commanding "officers."

While no statistically significant difference was found between functional and service groups related to levels of perceived cooperativeness, the similar responses from each group could suggest a recognition of two levels of corporate identity. Both groups somewhat disagreed that cooperation existed between them when it was defined as encouragement. This may reflect the "us" and "them" between groups perception. However, both groups somewhat agreed that cooperation existed between them when it was defined as

task-related. This may reflect the perception of the collective "us" as working under "them" for the objectives of the corporation.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The OCP instrument has received some validation through this and one earlier independent study. Additional research might consider using the OCP instrument as part of a longitudinal study throughout organizational change. If assumptions made in this research about the process of perceptual change regarding communications occurs over a long period of time, then the OCP instrument may prove useful as a measurement of those gradual changes at different developmental points.

The complex "open-auth" dimension which was developed through the OCP instrument needs further examination. While these dimensions were supported through qualitative analysis and the value ranking instrument, interpreting this dimension may be aided by additional studies in organizational settings.

Another fruitful area for future research may be an exploration of team metaphors. How are the metaphors which develop within the teams different than the metaphors used by management or experienced throughout the rest of the organization? Again, a longitudinal study might prove

particularly interesting. As teams begin to construct their own reality, are new metaphors created as a reflection of those changes? Are metaphors similar across self-managed teams within organizations as was suggested in this study? How do metaphors express the changing perception of the power relationship between team members and management?

Though not addressed directly in this study, additional research on self-managed teams and gender may provide some interesting findings. A wealth of literature is available on the differences in communication styles and gender. But how do these differences play out within organizational change when entire teams are comprised of females? Do female teams negotiate the power relationship between management differently than male or mixed groups?

Finally, more research needs to be done on perceived organizational values as opposed to values actually held by employees during organizational change. As suggested in this study, considerable differences may exist between what employees are told to believe and what they actually embrace as a value. Due to the limitations of this study, only the perceptions employees had about corporate values were measured. How might those values compare to the ones the employees believe are important? How do the values the employees believe are important compare to what management thinks employees have accepted? As indicated by the

research of Boxx, Odom, and Dunn (1991), value congruency is an important consideration in overall job satisfaction. More attention to these congruencies could be worthwhile in organizational communication research.

SUMMARY

Though this study has had a number of limitations, it does provide an interesting glimpse into the evolving realities of self-managed teams within one corporation during organizational change. It also points to the ways in which implicit and explicit power mediate communication between management and subordinates. Again, it may be just one "snapshot in time" taken from a certain angle, but it is an interesting angle, indeed!

NOTES

¹ The first multidimensional scaling interpretation was suggested by thesis chair, L. David Ritchie. This interpretation was also discussed with thesis committee member, Leslie Good.

² The last interpretation for the multidimensional scaling map of the service team was suggested by Leslie Good.

³ The interpretation that the Claims' polarized view of customer service may indicate a feeling of being torn between service to the customer and the organization was suggested by thesis chair, L. David Ritchie.

⁴ The *task* and *expressive* interpretations were offered by Miles Jackson, a statistics and computer consultant and sociology instructor.

⁵ Reverse coding and the development and interpretation of the "Open-Auth scale was suggested by thesis chair, L. David Ritchie.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Speech Communication
Portland State University

Informed Consent

I, _____, hereby agree to serve as a subject in a research project about organizational communication conducted by Paula Blunck (under the supervision of Dr. David Ritchie and Dr. Leslie Good) of the Department of Speech Communication, Portland State University.

I understand that the project involves answering a few questions and sorting a stack of cards. I understand that no identifying information will be associated with my responses, and that my responses will be entirely confidential. I understand that there are no anticipated risks to me, that I will receive no direct benefit from participation in this study, but my participation may help to increase knowledge in a way that may benefit others in the future.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time without any penalty.

I have read and I understand this "Informed consent" document, and I agree to participate in this study.

Date _____

Signature _____

Note: If you experience problems that are the result of participation in this study, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Research Committee, office of Grants and Contracts, 345 Cramer Hall, Portland State University (503) 725-3417.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Paula Blunck, 752-3545 /665-2432, Dr. David Ritchie, 275-3550, or Dr. Leslie Good, 725-3608.

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION STUDY

This project has to do with communication within work groups (teams, departments) and between workers and their immediate supervisor. If you are participating in a self-managed work team, "manager" will refer to management outside the team.

SEX: M [] F [] FORMAL EDUCATION (# YRS COLLEGE):

LENGTH OF SERVICE WITH ORGANIZATION _____

LENGTH OF TIME IN TEAM OR DEPARTMENT _____

DID YOUR TEAM RECEIVE TRAINING FOR TEAM BUILDING?

Y [] N []

PRIMARY OCCUPATION: _____

PART 1.

The following are statements people sometimes use to describe their work relationships. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes your relationship with your department, work group, supervisors, or manager. Then indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the appropriate number after each question.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1. Our department/team often talks about topics and issues that generate a lot of disagreement.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

2. My manager feels it is important to be in charge.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

3. My manager asks my opinion when talking about our department/team business.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

4. My manager often conveys the attitude that his or her ideas are right and should not be questioned.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
5. My manager often says something like, "You should always look at both sides of the issue," or, "have you taken other aspects into consideration?"
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
6. When anything really important is involved, I am expected to go along with it without question.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
7. If my manager does not approve of something, he or she does not want to hear it.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
8. In our department/team, we often talk about our feelings and emotions related to the decisions we make.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
9. My manager and I often have relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
10. I enjoy talking with my manager, even when we disagree.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
11. My manager likes to hear my opinions, even when we don't agree.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
12. My manager encourages me to express my feelings about decisions that are made.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
13. This organization has made it clear that there are some things which should not be talked about.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5

14. We often talk in our department/team about things we have accomplished.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
15. In our department/team, we talk about plans for the future.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
16. Management often implies something like "You don't know what you are talking about."
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
17. My manager encourages me to challenge his or her ideas and beliefs.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
18. This organization often gives me the impression that a subordinate should not disagree with a superior.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
19. My manager tends to be very open about feelings.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
20. This organization has given me the impression that it is better to give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
21. I often tell my manager what I am thinking about things.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
22. In our company, management usually has the last word.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5
23. My manager encourages everyone to have some say in important decisions.
- 0 1 2 3 4 5

24. My manager sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from his or hers.

0 1 2 3 4 5

25. I can tell my manager almost anything.

0 1 2 3 4 5

26. When I am working, I am expected to obey management without question.

0 1 2 3 4 5

27. Members from other departments pass on important information to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5

28. Members of other departments seem threatened when I learn new skills and knowledge.

0 1 2 3 4 5

29. I work independently of members from other departments.

0 1 2 3 4 5

30. Members of other departments prefer to work independently rather than with me.

0 1 2 3 4 5

31. Members of other departments show concern for what I want to accomplish.

0 1 2 3 4 5

32. Members of other departments help me find ways to achieve my objectives.

0 1 2 3 4 5

33. Members of other departments seem disturbed by my accomplishments.

0 1 2 3 4 5

34. I learn a lot when I interact with members from other departments.

0 1 2 3 4 5

35. Members of other departments seem to get in the way of my growth and development.

0 1 2 3 4 5

36. Members of other departments seem threatened when I am highly effective.

0 1 2 3 4 5

37. Members of other departments work best when they work alone.

0 1 2 3 4 5

38. Members from other departments seem pleased when I succeed.

0 1 2 3 4 5

39. Members of other departments try to restrict my attempts for improvement.

0 1 2 3 4 5

40. Members of other departments share ideas and resources with me.

0 1 2 3 4 5

41. Members of other departments like to demonstrate their superiority.

0 1 2 3 4 5

42. Members of other departments like to show they know more than I do.

0 1 2 3 4 5

43. Others outside my department help me do a good job.

0 1 2 3 4 5

44. Members of other departments show more concern for what they want to accomplish than for what I want to accomplish.

0 1 2 3 4 5

45. Members from other departments like to get rewards through their own individual work.

0 1 2 3 4 5

PART 11. GIVEN YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CORPORATE MISSION, PLEASE IDENTIFY WHAT YOU BELIEVE TO BE FIVE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND FIVE OF THE LEAST IMPORTANT VALUES FROM AMONG THE FOLLOWING:

INDICATE MOST IMPORTANT BY USING THE LETTER "M."
INDICATE LEAST IMPORTANT BY USING THE LETTER "L."

_____ Setting and meeting aggressive goals.

_____ Focusing on results as a company

_____ Developing new and better automated systems and technology.

_____ Empowering employees to act.

_____ Continually improving.

_____ Communicating with clarity when dealing with customers.

_____ Attracting and retaining profitable business.

_____ Respecting differences

_____ Working together in a cooperative manner.

_____ Paying attention to details.

_____ Anticipating the needs of the customers.

_____ Providing timely information and services to both internal and external customers.

_____ Rewarding for "results".

_____ Maintaining a financially stable company.

- _____ Recognizing the importance of people as individuals.
- _____ Receiving ongoing training and development.
- _____ Improving internal coordination and communication.
- _____ Encouraging business "partnerships".
- _____ Educating the customer
- _____ Identifying poor risks
- _____ Operating with integrity and fairness.
- _____ Providing leadership as an insurance company in the insurance industry.
- _____ Embracing a common corporate purpose
- _____ Understanding relevant regulations and policies
- _____ Receiving feedback from internal and external customers.
- _____ Decreasing paper flow.
- _____ Assuming more individual responsibility for the success of the corporation.
- _____ Receiving regular feedback from managers regarding performance.